UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

BY WILLIAM G. BALLANTINE

Translator of
"The Riverside New Testament"

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BY

WILLIAM G. BALLANTINE

Author of "The Young Man from Jerusalem" and "Discovering Jesus" and Translator of "The Riverside New Testament"

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CONTENTS

Foreword xi

I The Search for Truth 3

II Problems in Translating the New Testament 17

III The Letter or the Spirit of Scripture? 61

IV St. Paul's Way of Reasoning . . 97

V The Surprising Experiences of Bishop Colenso 143

VI Education for Christian Living . 165

FOREWORD

FOREWORD

I

THIS book is intended primarily for the young college and university men and women of America, undergraduates or recent graduates, who believe in the Bible but are in doubt how to use it. They have been educated in the university spirit, "reverence in the presence of truth and fearlessness in the face of human authority," and in that spirit they must deal with the Bible if they consider it at all.

Every one of the following chapters deals with one or another phase of the same question—how to understand and use the Bible. Naturally the first thing will be to consider what is meant by the university spirit, the general mood of mind in which the whole subject must be approached if any results of

permanent value are to be secured. Intellectual peace can come only from intellectual candor and courage, the habit of respecting our own minds, looking dispassionately at all of the facts and then cheerfully accepting what they teach with the assurance that all truth is harmonious with itself, and with the mind of God.

II

The New Testament is much the most vital part of the Bible. But the original of it is in Greek, not the Greek of Homer or of Plato, which students are supposed to learn in college—the few of them who now study that language—but the "common Greek" spoken in western Asia and northern Africa in the centuries following Alexander's conquests. All serious study of Christianity must of course begin with reading the New Testament, but the book will be necessarily read in a translation.

Here a difficulty arises. The venerated and admired King James version presents the learning of three hundred years ago in a form of English which was even then somewhat antique. No serious searcher for the meaning of the book will be satisfied to depend on that. Recourse must be had to some recent version.

Here again is embarrassment. Which of the recent versions shall the student choose? Put forth by unauthorized individuals on their own initiative, these various new versions have as yet been subjected to little intelligent criticism. A fresh translation of the New Testament should fulfil these conditions: it should rest on adequate familiarity with "common Greek," it should be clothed in the best English of our time, and it should not betray any theological prejudices of its author. Probably it is too much to hope that any

translation will ever fully meet these three requirements, simple though they seem. In the second chapter I have given specimens of the problems that translators must solve. Some of these problems will be new to untechnical readers who will be particularly astonished to learn that in four recent versions St. Paul's theory of the person of Christ has been completely transformed by simply injecting St. John's theology into the translation of Paul's innocent little word *was*.

III

Eloquent appeals are often heard nowadays to "take Christ seriously." Alas! in many cases it is too evident that just what the preacher himself lacks is intellectual seriousness, a very different thing from emotional fervor. He has never sat down to patient and comprehensive study of the way in which Jesus spoke and acted.

Single striking utterances of our Lord, taken in a fragmentary way as if they embraced the whole program of the Christian life, are put forward as panaceas for all the ills of our agonizing world.

The third chapter—The Letter or the Spirit of Scripture?—is an endeavor to show how unreasonable it is to start out with the determination to follow the letter of Scripture with our eyes shut to the facts of life about us, throwing upon God all the responsibility for whatever disastrous consequences may come. From a comprehensive consideration of all that is recorded of our Lord's sayings and from his action in concrete cases the conclusion is irresistible that all he ever intended was that we should keep our eyes open and act always on our own best judgment in his spirit without much attention to his precise words.

IV

The reading of the New Testament is recommended by ministers of all denominations. But most people read only their favorite passages here and there. Few read a whole gospel or epistle at a sitting and fewer still make any attempt to follow the deeper thinking of the authors. In the fourth chapter—that on St. Paul's Way of Reasoning—the attempt is made to analyze his arguments in his letter to the Galatians. Only those of my readers who have the full hardihood of the university spirit will go forward with me here; for most people have too little confidence in their own minds and too much awe of St. Paul to venture any such thing. They are like that pious old Scotch woman who admired the preaching of Dr. Chalmers but did not pretend to understand him; they "would not hae the presumption."

Jesus and Paul are the two towering personalities of the New Testament. The traditional teaching of the church assumes that the utterances of Paul came as authoritatively from God as did those of Jesus. The result of our investigation brings us to the vast relief of discovering that the dark theological complexities of St. Paul need not be put on a level with the simple luminous message of Jesus.

V

The incidents related in the brief chapter on Bishop Colenso's experiences show in a very striking way how amazingly religious leaders—and even literary men of the highest culture—in the last half of the last century were lacking in candor and even ordinary courtesy when confronted by unwelcome facts, facts to-day admitted by every scholar. The story of the treatment of

Bishop Colenso illustrates exactly what the true university spirit in the investigation of the Bible is not.

How are the young to be trained for practical Christian living? What part should the Bible have in the religious education of to-day? These questions are considered in the sixth chapter, with the conclusion that a drastic revision of prevailing methods is very much needed.

Some readers will probably feel that one more chapter should have been added to present in simple, constructive form just what the author regards as the fundamental message of Jesus. Such a chapter would certainly have been included if the author had not already covered that ground in his little volume "The Young Man from Jerusalem," published four years ago. To that book any readers who may care to pursue the subject further are earnestly referred.

THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

I

THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

I

THE educated young minds of to-day, accustomed to explore the universe by the methods of science and to accept nothing upon mere tradition, are driven to test their religious faith in the same spirit.

Just what is the university spirit? I once happened to be teaching in a theological seminary which had no creed. One of the more conservative professors used to ask with a troubled face, "How can you expect Christian people of wealth to contribute endowments to an institution which

gives no assurance what it will teach ten years from now?" That is a natural question. But the answer to it is: The truth-seeker teaches to-day what seems to him true to-day; beyond that he can give no assurance to anybody as to his future teaching. When Stanley launched his boats on the Lualaba River, he could not say whether he would come out into the Nile or into the Kongo. He is the type of the university spirit, which is the unfaltering pursuit of truth.

Some would gladly allow us to go forward and discover new things if only we would engage not to revise our ideas of the old things. But knowledge does not grow merely by additions; it grows also by revisions. Of course much discovery is merely of additional facts. The discovery of America did not change at all the map of Europe. It merely added a new world to the old.

But many discoveries change our notions of the universe. The discovery of Copernicus moved the center of the universe. Darwin's discovery of Evolution revolutionized all the biological sciences. Since Colenso began investigating the books of Moses sixty years ago our whole notion of the nature of the Bible and of the proper way to ascertain Christian truth and duty has undergone revolution. No encyclopedia can be kept up to date by merely adding supplementary volumes. All the articles, even the article on Adam and the article on God, have to be rewritten.

Mental honesty is a spiritual grace of the first order. The most distressing fact in the religious life of America to-day is that the religious public, as a whole, while spiritually serious, is intellectually frivolous. People are indifferent to the importance of honest thinking. They have little sense of the

solemn responsibility of giving true reasons for the faith that is in them. Right thinking is to the forward movement of religion what the flanges of the wheels are to a railway train. Emotion gives power and impulse, but only right thinking can insure safe progress and freedom from terrible disasters. Or, to change the figure, right thinking is to religious fervor what the levees at New Orleans are to the Mississippi. Without them the river would be only a desolating yellow flood.

II

Most sermons start from some text of Holy Scripture and ostensibly unfold some word of God. Most sermons contain more or less of argument. Yet very often the lessons drawn from the Bible have no connection with the thought of the sacred writer and often the arguments are trans-

parently fallacious. The alarming thing about this is that most of the people in the pews do not care two straws so long as the preacher makes an inspiring impression on their emotions. Any criticism of him is attributed to pedantry or conceit.

Phillips Brooks once preached a tender and moving sermon all based upon the assumption that the Edomites lived right across the river Jordan from the Jews. It was as if he had assumed that the Connecticut River divided Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The Bishop's Boston audience, of course, knew nothing about Palestinian geography, and never noticed the mistake, and I find it well-nigh impossible to make my own students see that such an error matters. For illustration I have been forced to use the following parable:

One bright morning I was crossing Court

Square in Springfield, when my attention was attracted by a refined and dignified man who was standing and looking about him, evidently under strong emotions and with tears rolling down his cheeks. I sympathetically inquired what so moved him.

"It is the thought," he said, "that this is Springfield, that here Abraham Lincoln lived and worked, that from here he went to be President of the United States and to undertake a task greater than that of Washington."

"No, my good friend," said I, "this is Springfield, Massachusetts. It was in Springfield, Illinois, that Abraham Lincoln lived."

At this an expression of disgust and contempt came over his face, and he exclaimed: "With your geographical pedantry, for which I care nothing, you would disturb one of the holiest moments of my life."

III

When the intelligence is ignored there is no telling into what absurd vagaries of superstition and dogmatism people may plunge. The only hope of the world is in a trained religious leadership of men accustomed to think, as well as to feel, and to be so alive to the august supremacy of truth that they are fearless of any other authority. We want men who take their own minds seriously. I have always been greatly impressed by that story of Lalande, the French astronomer, who discovered the planet Neptune and never knew it, because he did not respect himself. Lalande was making a map of the heavens. On one night he would observe through his telescope the stars in a small area of the sky and the next night he would repeat and verify his observations. Then he would make his map. It happened once that he found that on the second night

he had recorded one star as in a different relative place from that shown on the previous night. Now Lalande was a competent and very accurate observer. His observations proved that he had discovered a new planet and was entitled to immortal fame. But he was what I call a frivolous man. He did not take himself seriously. He was not expecting to discover a planet. No one had authorized him to do it. Except that he had seen it with his own eyes he had no reason to think that there was a new planet. So he crossed out the record of his first observation and put an interrogation mark at the second, and said nothing. Half a century later, bolder men discovered Neptune and then they knew that Lalande must have seen it and they looked into his notes and found the evidence of his cowardice.

We must train men to be so intellectually

serious that if they see what no man has ever seen before, they will dare to own themselves discoverers.

IV

The religion of the future must be absolutely scientific. The age of minds with water-tight compartments separating religious thinking from secular thinking is forever past. The unity of the mind is one of the great thoughts of modern psychology. Under the lead of philosophers like Bergson many religious people seem to rejoice in flouting the reason and thinking what they please, on the ground that instinct, and not reason, rules in important matters. There is a terrible danger in such lawless thinking. The often repeated remark that religious faith moves in a world higher than that of science springs from a pernicious confusion. Reason is simply the self-consistency of the

mind. Logic is the outline of the requirements of consistency. A man who has lost his reason is insane. No fact in any sphere can be proved by reason alone and no facts, except our direct intuitions and experiences, can ever be proved without reason. All genuine proof is scientific proof whether the subject be the properties of radium or the immortality of the soul and the existence of God. Of course the facts with which we start in the different investigations are different. But in every case we must start with facts of some kind and in no case can reason supply those facts or do more or less than act as umpire and pronounce on the harmony of the conclusions with the facts.

Once let it be understood that a college does not expect its students to go to the bottom of the most important subjects, but desires that they shall receive at second hand the ideas of other men and shall live and

die for those other men's convictions, based upon unknown reasons, and you insure the breeding of a race of dwarfs. No, give us young men who stand on their own feet, look with their own eyes, think with their own brains, and dare call their souls their own.

PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATING
THE NEW TESTAMENT

II

PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATING THE NEW TESTAMENT

I

The sublime task of retranslating the New Testament again devolves on English-speaking scholars. They cannot escape a profound sense of obligation to the multitudes who understand readily no language but the living English of to-day. The majority of these people as yet ask for nothing better than the beautiful old King James version. But there are a good many individuals who care less for stately Jacobean English than for knowing the actual thoughts of Jesus and of Paul. They know

that King James's men did not always understand the original so well as the scholars of to-day, and that even where they understood it they often expressed themselves in English words which have since changed their meaning, and that sometimes they intentionally avoided exact translation, as when they rendered the Greek word that means *lie down* by the English *sit down*.

To meet the wants of such people several new versions of great merit have recently appeared. But each one of these, along with its undeniable merits, seems also in some particulars to fall short of its high aim. All tend to slip into paraphrase instead of translation and incline to tell the reader rather what the translator thinks the author meant than simply what the author said. One translator is too much fettered by a mechanical, schoolroom theory of Greek syntax. Another introduces some undignified and even

ungrammatical English. Another lets his personal theological convictions show through.

A good deal of currency has been given to the notion that the Greek of the New Testament was the language of the street and that the rhetoric of the book is that of the illiterate. No basis exists for either of these ideas. It is true that fresh evidence has come to light showing how widely the Greek language was used at that time by the people of western Asia and northern Africa. But what does that prove about the sacred book? English is used now in America by a hundred million common people but that does not prove that President Coolidge writes in a rustic style. No doubt the Greek of the first century differed very considerably from that of Athens in the age of Pericles. But it was still rich in vocabulary and exact in syntax and was one of the most consummate instruments of expression ever con-

trived by human genius. It was no careless colloquial.

As to the matter of literature, the narratives and addresses of the gospels and the book of Acts surely surpass the Anabasis and the Memorabilia. The Fourth Gospel equals any dialogue of Plato's. Paul's great climaxes in his epistles, taken simply as literature, equal any of the Attic orations. The book of Revelation offers undeniably some startling Greek syntax, but only because the author thought in Aramaic while he wrote in Greek. As literature the book cannot be placed below Dante's immortal Divine Comedy. The dignified literary atmosphere of the King James version truly reproduces that of the original and should by all means be preserved in every new attempt. It is not in the least inconsistent with the directness and virility of modern speech. In peculiarly solemn and impassioned ad-

dress, the English of to-day rises instinctively to *thee* and *thou*. The antique dialect of prayer is still our living language of prayer and comes home to the hearts of English-speaking people as the natural expression of adoration.

An acceptable translation must be shaped by these ideals: to preserve the noble literary atmosphere of the old version, to say in the simplest and best English neither more nor less than the Greek says, nowhere to obtrude the translator's interpretation between author and reader, and not to make the matters in the book seem more like modern ideas and ways than they were. In short the ideal of a translator is to keep himself unseen and to serve merely as a plate glass window through which the man who cannot read Greek will see just what he would see if he did read Greek—all the ambiguities and uncertainties, but also all the wonders and glories.

II

The realization of these ideals is however far from possible and he who undertakes to translate the New Testament will soon learn modesty. He will at once find himself facing many perplexing problems. Let us now consider a few samples of these problems and of the ways in which our various English versions have dealt with them.

The Greek tells us that the good Samaritan placed the wounded Jew on his own beast. *Beast* however is not quite an acceptable word in English. We prefer to name the kind of beast. But the animal of the lowly Samaritan was probably an ass. Here again is a *persona non grata.* So the 20th Century and Weymouth and Goodspeed say *mule.* Mules, however, are nowhere named in the New Testament. Moffatt says, "He mounted him on his own *steed.*" But this overshoots the mark and has a romantic

sound that does not fit the story. Why be more specific than the original?

What shall we call in English the small body of fresh water across which Jesus sailed so often and in which Peter and his companions fished? Shall we say *sea* of Galilee or *lake* of Galilee? Luke always calls it lake, but Matthew, Mark and John call it sea. We should never think of calling a little body of fresh water like that a sea. It is very much smaller than Lake George. True, the Greek word used by Matthew, Mark and John is just the same that is applied to the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. It is the thrilling word that Xenophon's ten thousand Greeks shouted so rapturously when they caught their first glimpse of the Euxine and knew that their long perilous march was ended and their lives were saved. If we say lake we miss a certain largeness of suggestion. Moffatt

says that Jesus went out of the house and seated himself by the seaside. Goodspeed says that he was sitting on the seashore. These are large pictures. We seem to smell the salt air and to look away to where sky and water meet. We never would speak of the margin of Lake George as the seashore. To say "beside the lake" gives us a smaller and totally different scene. And if we change the translation to lake what becomes of the hymn, "I love to think of Jesus by the sea" and all the other marine hymns?

Jesus proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom of God. But we are living in a democratic age. We are making the world safe for democracy. God has said, "I am tired of kings." Some people say that they want a democratic God—whatever that may mean. If Jesus were living now, would he use the word kingdom? Moffatt thinks not, and so always uses "Reign of God" or

"Realm of God." But then to reign is just what a king does and realm is merely old French for kingdom. So after all we get only a distinction without a difference. Does it not seem that if Jesus used the word kingdom and it is there in the gospels, the English reader has a right to know it? The reader is as competent as the translator is to guess what Jesus would say if he were here now.

Does translating the New Testament into our language mean giving our young people the notion that the people in ancient Palestine had the same sort of furniture in their houses and the same social customs that we have now? Teachers of history in our public schools make an earnest and successful effort to picture ancient life as it was. They give Roman archaeology along with Roman history. Shall we adopt the opposite principle in teaching the New Testament and

picture events in ancient Jerusalem as if they had happened yesterday in Chicago?

When the old King James version was made, candles were in common use in England. So that version says, "Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel but on a candlestick." Later candles went out of fashion in England and so the Revised Version reads, "Neither do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel but on a stand." My mother thought that she had infallible authority for saying that Jesus and his audience used candles and candlesticks. No such thing; those Jews had never seen a candle, much less a candlestick. All the recent versions have lamps. Will some future version bring in electricity?

III

Here is a more striking example of our perplexities. In Palestine in New Testa-

ment times people never sat at the table to eat. They reclined on couches placed around the table, supported themselves on their left elbows and ate with their free right hands. Their feet stretched away into the background. Even when eating out of doors they always lay down on the ground.

This seems to us a ridiculous custom and we do not like to mention it. The majestic old King James version, suppressed the fact entirely and boldly translated the Greek word *lie* by the English word *sit*. This occasioned some curious confusions. For example, we are told that Jesus "went into a Pharisee's house and *sat* down to meat. And behold a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus *sat* at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment and stood at his feet behind him weeping and began to wash his feet with tears and did wipe them with the hairs of

her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with ointment." In the last three hundred years, millions of people have read this story and never have asked how the woman standing behind him could get at at his feet under the table. Students say to me, "My mother loved the Bible. She never saw any of the difficulties you raise." My reply is, "Your mother was born in the 19th century. She was not taught to think. But you and I live in the 20th century and we get a jolt where your mother went smoothly. The professors of English literature who are so enthusiastic over the old version seem not to read much more thoughtfully than your mother did."

Dr. Goodspeed in his translation of this passage gives no hint that Jesus was reclining, a fact vital to a right understanding of the incident. He says Jesus "went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the

table. Now, there was a woman in the town who was leading a sinful life and when she learned that he was having dinner, etc." Why this refusal to mention an ancient custom and paint the picture as Luke painted it?

In the story of the feeding of the five thousand the Greek says that Jesus told the disciples to have the people "recline in rows of fifty." The King James version as usual boldly says that Jesus said, "Make them sit down." Strangely the 20th Century says, "Get them seated," Weymouth says, "Make them sit down" and Goodspeed says, "Have them sit down." Moffatt alone has the courage to say, "Make them lie down." It seems to require courage.

In one passage the King James version does come near admitting the ancient custom of reclining at meals. In describing the scene at the last supper it says, "Now there

was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples whom Jesus loved." But it has previously said, "After he had washed their feet and had taken his garments and was *set* down again." The Greek here is "had lain down again." This seemed so "un-English" to the King James men that they could not bring themselves to say it. Goodspeed feels so, too, and says, "had taken his place." Weymouth says, "returned to the table." The 20th Century says, "taken his place." Moffatt says "he lay down again," here again alone showing courage.

IV

In England wheat and barley are corn; to Americans only maize, Indian corn, is corn. Of course maize was wholly unknown to the ancient world. The King James version says, "And it came to pass that he went through the cornfields on the Sabbath day,

and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn." The 20th Century says "cornfields" and "ears of wheat," Weymouth says, "wheatfields" and "ears of wheat." Moffatt says, "cornfields" and "ears of corn." Goodspeed says "wheat-fields" and "heads of wheat." But the Greek is the general word for grainfields and the grain was just as likely barley. Again why not say just what the Greek says?

The difference in the meaning of the word corn in England and America suggests a point to which we may refer in passing. Goodspeed, in his preface speaks as if there were a good many expressions familiar in England and Scotland which are strange to American ears. The fact is that the English spoken in America by intelligent Americans around their own tables is nearly identical with that written by Strachey, Charnwood, Inge and others in the best British books of

to-day. There are very few expressions in the 20th Century New Testament or in Weymouth that strike an American as strange. Moffatt, however, has introduced into his translation many words and idioms which to American ears suggest the talk of the third cabin. As often as twenty times, I should think, I have come across the phrase "in case" meaning "so that not." Moffatt makes Jesus say to the man who was healed at the pool of Bethesda, "Commit no more sins, in case something worse befalls you," and he means, "so that something worse may not befall you." At the last supper Jesus sorrowfully told his disciples that one of them would betray him. Moffatt says that each one said to him, "Lord, surely it is not me." Moffatt makes Jesus say to Nicodemus, "Do not wonder at me telling you, you must be born from above." He makes Jesus say, "This poor widow has put in more than

them all." Such expressions are everywhere in America regarded as betraying ignorance and they seem equally so regarded among the best educated people in England.

We are surprised when Moffatt tells us that the stone rolled before the tomb of Jesus was a *boulder*, when he calls the city clerk of Ephesus *the secretary of state*, and when he tells us that one of the soldiers *pricked* the side of Jesus, making a wound large enough for St. Thomas to thrust his hand into, and that this "pricking" fulfilled the prophecy "They shall look on him whom they have *impaled*."

Common people in England now put *ever* after interrogative pronouns. We Americans, keeping up the tradition of the great English classics, put ever only after indefinite relatives. Cockneys say, "Whatever is that?" where we say simply, "What is that?" Moffatt telling of the birth of John

the Baptist says, "All who heard of it bore it in mind: they said, 'Whatever will this child become?' "

At the end of that impressive story of the woman taken in adultery, after all the conscience-stricken accusers have gone out and the woman stands there alone before Jesus, Moffatt makes him say to her, "Be off and never sin again." How far this is below the dignity and tenderness of the King James, "Go and sin no more."

V

Every translator must admit that we cannot always say in English exactly what the Greek says, and for this there may be various reasons. In the narratives of the Hebrew Old Testament every sentence regularly begins with the word *and*. This is imitated in the narratives of the Greek New Testament. But English usage is altogether

averse to the reproduction of these superfluous ands. *Therefore* is another word which all the evangelists use excessively. John in his brief gospel uses it two hundred times. Using therefore was a habit like saying "you know." We all have friends with that habit. I once heard an eminent preacher say that John had a very logical mind and was always noticing the causal relation of events and ideas. Nothing of the kind. He had the unconscious habit of saying therefore as an expletive. If we should put the word therefore monotonously two hundred times into the English of John we should not make the gospel logical, we should make it ridiculous.

The Revised Version, in endeavoring to be literal, put in therefore a number of times where the King James had omitted it, and it was reserved for the Revised Version to achieve that triumph of absurd literalness

"the footstool of his feet." The surprising thing is that men so bright as Moffatt and Goodspeed have kept it.

How far are we justified in editing the text as well as translating it? John tells us that Jesus said, "I and my Father are one." The 20th Century thinks that this is in poor taste and changes it to "The Father and I," and so does Goodspeed. But is not this correction from the point of view of a schoolma'am? Paul often uses the editorial "we" in his epistles. Moffatt and Goodspeed dislike this and change "we" into "I" over whole pages, thus eliminating a striking characteristic of Paul's style.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said that he had not come to do away with the least particular of the Law or the Prophets and, in his concrete style, he mentioned the smallest Hebrew letter, y, and used another word which means a tiny stroke distinguish-

ing any two similar Hebrew letters. Goodspeed renders this "not one dotting of an i or crossing of a t." Our young people will get the true meaning, but will they not at the same time receive the impression that those Jews used our alphabet?

VI

The names of coins and of amounts of money bring this difficulty up in another shape. The King James version has what we know as the Parable of the Pounds. The Greek word naming the unit of money is *mna*, which in silver was worth about twenty dollars, possibly more. The point of the parable is not at all the exact amount of the money but the ratios of faithfulness and reward. One servant gained tenfold, one fivefold and one gained nothing, and each was rewarded according to his gain or failure.

How shall this story be told in English? Pound was the large unit in England in 1611 and so the old version said pound. That, however, is less than a fifth of the value indicated. The 20th Century accordingly represents the nobleman as giving his servants ten pounds apiece. This spoils the symmetry of the numbers. In the original the servant who gained tenfold was made ruler over ten cities. The 20th Century has him gain one hundred pounds and get only ten cities. Weymouth decides to keep just one pound apiece in the text and make up for it by telling the real value in a footnote. Moffatt makes the nobleman give each servant a *five pound note.* The most faithful servant gains fifty pounds and is set over ten cities. Here again the symmetry of the numbers is destroyed. He should rule over fifty cities. And there is another serious weakness in Moffatt's solu-

tion of the problem. He has made Jesus talk about five pound notes. Do we want our high school students to be led to suppose that the bank of England was issuing five pound notes nineteen centuries ago and that these notes were in circulation as far east as Syria? Goodspeed, keeping in mind that American young people think of a pound as a unit of weight and not as a unit of value, makes the nobleman give each slave twenty *dollars*. The Riverside says simply "a sum of money," and so does not misrepresent history.

Sometimes, however, it seems necessary to name a coin. In such cases the Riverside uses the words penny and shilling as not being technically names of our coinage and in a general way suggesting the smallest coin and the next important one above. But it never introduces into the text the word dollar. This may be inconsistency.

The word *talent* has become a part of the English language. We speak of any man of large endowments as "talented." So there is no call to take that word out of the New Testament. But Goodspeed turns the parable of the talents into the parable of the slaves who received respectively five thousand, two thousand and one thousand *dollars*. Is this anachronism necessary?

How far may we assume that American readers will understand metaphors and how far must we paraphrase them? Jesus said, "I tell you that there are some of those standing here who will not taste of death until they see the kingdom of God already here with power." Goodspeed changes "will not taste of death" into "certainly will live," so getting rid of the metaphor.

Jesus said, "If I am casting out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has already reached you." Goodspeed

and Moffatt keep this metaphor, but the 20th Century thinks it better to say "hand of God." Weymouth prefers to say "power of God" and to put "finger" into a footnote.

VII

What shall be done about proper names? No intelligent thought has ever been given to them and they have come down to us according to no system. Still, is it not best to keep them just as they are in the Revised Version, which correlates the New Testament with the Old? Any change makes confusion for readers in consulting maps and Bible dictionaries. Moffatt, however is restless. Every now and then he makes some whimsical change. He changes the Greek name Timothy into the Latin form Timotheus and the Hebrew name Zebedee into the Latin form Zebedaeus. But he does not change the Latin name Paul into Paulus and he

does not change James the son of Zebedee into Jacobus. He changes Nazareth into Nazaret but does not change Mary into Mariam. This is pure caprice. Poor Zebedee seems particularly exposed to attack. The 20th Century makes him Zebediah and Weymouth makes him Zabdi. What possible good can come from haphazard work like this?

How far shall modern ideas of delicacy lead us to veil the plain speech of an earlier age and an eastern land? Once when Jesus was talking, a woman in the crowd suddenly exclaimed, "Blessed was the womb that carried you and the breasts that you sucked!" Goodspeed gives this, "Blessed was the mother who bore you and nursed you!" This is more delicate, but does it reproduce the clear imagery of that mother in Israel? The King James, so much admired by professors of literature, renders this, "Blessed

is the womb that bare thee and the paps which thou hast sucked."

Among the peculiarities of New Testament Greek is the frequent use of what is called the "double negative." There are, as all scholars know, in Greek two words for *not*, one used in absolute sentences and the other in hypothetical sentences. In the New Testament, strangely enough, these two words are often used right together. This surprising phenomenon has not yet been satisfactorily accounted for. There are more cases of it in the New Testament, small as the book is, than in all classic Greek literature. Scholars used to suppose that this doubling of the negative was for emphasis. A little observation in reading would have shown that what was so common, could not be emphatic. Another curious fact is that this supposed emphatic negative is never used with the imperative, just where

it would naturally be expected. About twenty-five years ago I made a complete examination of the usage and contributed to the *American Journal of Philology* (Vol. xviii. 4) an article which Professor Gildersleeve, the editor, said was a demonstration that the double negative is not emphatic.

The men of King James generally overlooked the double negative, but occasionally it caught their eyes and then they rendered it "in no wise" or in some other emphatic way. Among recent translators Weymouth and Goodspeed generally give it emphasis. This frequent recurrence of overdone negation affects you like having the bass drum continually struck at the wrong times in the orchestra.

VIII

People delight in striking and ingenious ideas, and if an inventive commentator ever starts one it keeps in circulation unquestioned

although the concordance may show that it is wholly baseless. One of these baseless notions is that the Greek word ὑπάρχω means "to be by nature." This word occurs more than sixty times in the New Testament and it uniformly means simply "to be." But it happens to occur in that passage in Philippians where Paul says that "Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not think that equality with God was something to be grasped." Theologians argue, When Paul says that Christ "was," he means "was by nature" in the form of God, and that shows that Christ had the nature of God.

We may remark that, even granting the hypothesis, "was by nature" is not the predicate but the copula. The predicate is "in the form." To be by nature in the form is not the same as to be of the same nature. But there is no ground whatever for the

assumption that Paul meant "was by nature." Paul was always thinking of the two Adams. Christ was the last Adam and he was in the form of God. The first Adam according to Genesis had been in the image of God. Paul in referring to this uses the same word that he uses of Christ, but no one has ever thought that therefore Adam had the divine nature. The first Adam was tempted by the serpent with the promise that if he ate the forbidden fruit he would become like God. He grasped for that equality and fell. The last Adam did not grasp for equality with God and was therefore exalted and received the name above every name.

The truth is that Paul held the view, later represented by Arius, that Christ was the first created being, the typical man, God's agent in creating and redeeming the world. The great conflict at the memorable

Council of Nicaea in A. D. 325 was between John's view, represented by Athanasius, and Paul's view, represented by Arius. Athanasius prevailed so completely that the Church has ever since believed that Paul and John agree, an obvious mistake.

Goodspeed renders this famous passage, "Though he possessed the nature of God, he did not grasp at equality with God," and the 20th Century, Weymouth and Moffatt substantially agree. All of them wholly omit the words "in the form" which constitute Paul's predicate. Weymouth adds a footnote admitting that literally the Greek means, "was in the form" of God.

How astonishing to find that this immense structure of theological doctrine, this total transformation of Paul's Christology, rests merely on the baseless assumption that the word *was* has in this one place a sense which nobody thinks of attributing to it in any

one of the sixty other places where it occurs in the New Testament!

IX

The story of the arrest of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane is told in John's gospel with some amplifications not given in the others. The first three gospels tell how Judas came guiding a crowd of Jews sent out by the high priests, and how these men seized Jesus and took him for trial before their own Jewish court. Then in the morning, after the Jewish trial, he was handed over to the Romans. In John's gospel, however, Judas in arresting Jesus has the assistance of a battalion of Roman soldiers under the command of a military tribune, an officer about equal in rank to a colonel in our army. This seems so improbable a story that translators have shrunk from telling it. The King James version gives no

hint of it. English readers for these three hundred years have never suspected it. The Revised Version says, "band of men" and "chief captain," but those expressions are not understood. The 20th Century speaks of "the soldiers of the garrison and their commanding officer." Weymouth says, "the battalion and their tribune." Moffatt says indefinitely "the troops and their commander." Goodspeed says, "the garrison and the colonel." The Riverside says, "the battalion and the Tribune," and explains Tribune in a footnote. Battalion is the best word we have for a Roman cohort whose standard complement was 600 men. John's introduction of 600 Roman soldiers and their Tribune into the simple picture of the Jewish arrest given by the earlier evangelists produces a complication which naturally struck the King James translators dumb.

One conspicuous example of the fascina-

tion of an ingenious fancy is found in the last chapter of the gospel of John. After the miraculous draught of fishes and that strange breakfast on the shore, the risen Jesus turns to Peter, who has three times denied him, and three times asks Peter if he loves him. Now the peculiarity of this dialogue is that Jesus uses one word for love and Peter uses a different word for love. This variation in the word naturally suggests a variation in the thought. But a careful examination of the entire New Testament and of the entire Greek Old Testament shows conclusively that these two words had the very same meaning and were used indifferently for all kinds of love good or bad, deep or shallow. The truth is that in Greek, as in every other language, old words were continually going out of fashion and new words for the same ideas were coming in. In Greek Bible times the old word for love was slowly going out

of use. Now for centuries the new word has had the whole ground.

You may ask me, "Does the concert begin at eight o'clock?" And I may reply, "It commences at eight-fifteen." A foreigner might infer that you thought that the concert would *begin* and that I thought it would *commence*. *We* do not notice that different words have been used. When Jesus changed and used Peter's word the narrative says that Peter was grieved that he asked him that question for the *third* time. It was the first time that Jesus had used that word, but to Peter it was the same question for the third time.

Still this variation of words has set commentators and translators romancing. And they have a clear field since there is not a fact to limit their guessing. The King James translates both words just alike, "love." The Revised Version feels that something

should be done but, having no way of telling what, puts in little superior figures 10 at Jesus' word for love and 11 at Peter's word and says in a footnote, "Love in these places represents two different Greek words." All that the astonished English reader knows is that Jesus asked Peter, "Lovest thou me with love No. 10?" and Peter answered, "Thou knowest that I love thee with love No. 11." If this were not so shocking it would be amusing. The 20th Century makes Jesus ask Peter, "Do you love me?" and Peter say, "I am your friend." Weymouth makes Jesus ask, "Do you love me?" and Peter say, "You are dear to me." Goodspeed makes Jesus say, "Are you more devoted to me than these others?" and Peter say, "Yes, Master, you know that I love you." Who could guess that the Greek word which Goodspeed here renders "devoted" is the word that in all other places from beginning to end of the

book he has rendered "love"? Moffatt here keeps his head and makes no difference.

X

At the last supper, on the night on which he was betrayed, Jesus took bread and broke it and gave it to his disciples saying, "This is my body." Most Protestants think that he used the word *is* just as we do when we point to a picture and say, "This is my mother." Roman Catholics take the words literally, and out of these different interpretations have sprung long and bitter controversies. Moffatt is so sure that Protestants are right that he translates the passage, "It *means* my body" and "this *means* my blood." Of course if that is what Jesus said, the Catholics have the ground cut from under their feet. But has a translator the right to introduce his own interpretation into the text?

St. Matthew begins his account of the visit of the two Marys to the tomb of Jesus by saying, "Late on the Sabbath as the first day of the week was drawing near, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake." Here are two notes of time, it was late on the Sabbath and it was when the first day of the week was drawing near. To Jews the Sabbath ended at sunset on Saturday and the first day of the week drew near as sunset drew near. These two notes of time then fix the visit as just before sunset on Saturday. No one would ever have thought of any other meaning for the words if the other evangelists had not placed the visit on the morning of Easter Sunday. If we translate this passage of Matthew naturally we make contradiction with the other evangelists in one of the most sacred matters of gospel story. It must be admitted, too,

that the Greek literally says "the first day of the week was dawning." So are we not justified in assuming that the expression "late on the Sabbath" really means "after the Sabbath." But this word "dawning" is just the word that Luke uses to describe sunset Friday evening, when Jesus was buried. Nobody has ever thought that Luke meant by it anything but the oncoming of the new day, which for Jews began at sunset. It is only in these two places that this word *dawning* is used and in one of them everybody agrees that it means sunset. Here Matthew explains it by saying "late on the Sabbath." But there is too much at stake. Goodspeed says, "*After* the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning." In Luke he translates the same word not "dawning" but "just beginning," that is at sunset. Weymouth and the 20th Century do substantially the same. Moffatt says, "At the close of the

Sabbath as the first day of the week was dawning." But the first day of the week did not dawn in our sense till eleven hours after the close of the Sabbath. To ease his conscience Moffatt says that the burial of Jesus on Friday evening was when "the Sabbath was just dawning." He seems to hope that readers will compare the two places and see for themselves that *dawn* meant *sunset* to Jews. Is not a rendering like this a betrayal of the sacred responsibility of a translator?

XI

These specimens are but a few out of the many problems that test the head and heart of a translator. Self-confident indeed must be the man who in dealing with such questions does not often feel his knees tremble.

It was in 1526 that William Tyndale, that inspired man who first translated the New Testament directly from the Greek in-

to English, published his version. From that date for eighty-five years English scholars labored incessantly sending out one new revision after another until, in 1611, King James's men completed what we affectionately, but mistakenly, call the Authorized Version. Here English scholarship paused, conscious that, for the time, it had done its utmost. The pause lasted two hundred and seventy years. In 1881 came out the English Revised Version. The American Revised Version appeared twenty years later and since then new versions have been rapidly appearing. May it not be that this revived activity, like the earlier, will go on until at the end of perhaps eighty-five years a final version shall gather into itself whatever is best in each of our partial contributions?

THE LETTER OR THE SPIRIT
OF SCRIPTURE?

III

THE LETTER OR THE SPIRIT OF SCRIPTURE?

I

Can any of the practical questions of society be settled mechanically and infallibly by simply opening the Bible, thus saving us the trouble of studying the facts and the responsibility of forming a judgment? Is Divorce such a question? Is Pacifism such a question?

Many good people reply at once in the affirmative. Constantly we hear from eloquent preachers the most urgent appeals to go back and take the words of Jesus in earnest. Never, we are told, will the world

have peace, until the Sermon on the Mount is made the universal rule of individuals and of nations.

A few years ago Bishop Doane of Albany, who was one of the most earnest workers against the divorce evil, expressed himself in *Harper's Weekly* as follows:

> "There is a grave question, and the question is growing graver, whether there is any Scriptural sanction for dissolving the bond of marriage for any cause whatever. But there is no question that the Scriptures do not recognize any cause except adultery as making a divorce possible. In all other cases it must be only a separation. My own conviction is that the bond is indissoluble except by death. Surely the Christian sentiment of thoughtful men might come to feel the danger of going beyond the letter of Scripture. This would considerably reduce the frequency of divorce, although it would still leave untouched the scandal of collusion, and the difficulty of finding what is called the innocent party in a divorce suit."

There could not be a stronger or more candid statement of the literalist's position.

It will be observed that the Bishop is candid enough to admit that it is a grave question just what the letter of Scripture is on the subject of divorce and that it is his personal conviction that the words of Jesus are not so correctly reported in the gospel of Matthew, which allows divorce for adultery, as they are in Mark and Luke, which allow no divorce for any cause. He has himself gone through a process of higher criticism and has used his own fallible judgment in deciding which of the Scripture statements is the infallible "letter of Scripture." This must naturally cause some dismay among his followers at the outset. What we had hoped was to be able to settle perplexing questions without, at any point, falling back on anybody's fallible judgment.

Pacifists have a similar embarrassment when they start out with the determination to follow the very letter of Scripture. For

while Jesus said, "All who take the sword will perish by the sword" (Matt. xxvi. 52), he also said, "He who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one" (Luke xxii. 36), and, "I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matt. x. 34).

II

But on what solid grounds is it asserted that it is "dangerous for Christian men to go beyond the letter of Scripture"? Have we any reason to believe that Jesus wished us to go by the letter? What if in following the letter we should miss his spirit and act like mere machines where he would have us act like thinking men?

Jesus used an extraordinary rhetoric. For he had a unique purpose. It was nothing less than to give spiritual liberty to a world bound hand and foot in the grave clothes of Talmudic literalism. He refused to be a judge or divider among men.

His was a far more exalted and permanent function. During his whole life he fought against the tyranny of mere words and for the lordship of the actual living spiritual man. In his discourses he suggested great truths by parables, by questions, by metaphors, by paradoxes, by hyperboles, by every device which could elude the semblance of fixed legislative or judicial formulas. It is the irony of history that such language has been seized upon for statute law. Jesus did not intend to save us the trouble or the responsibility of dealing with concrete situations, but he intended to suggest the heavenly point of view.

Even the hastiest reader of the gospels must see that Jesus, in his teaching, constantly used the rhetorical figure which is called Hyperbole, a figure the most unsuitable conceivable for the statement of laws. The word "hyperbole" is derived

from two Greek words meaning *to throw beyond.* It is defined in The Century Dictionary as "an extravagant statement or assertion not intended to be understood literally." Jesus apparently aimed to startle into thought the most indolent and to fix his suggestions in the memories of the most forgetful. His remarks often lack absolutely the characteristics of precise definition, and seem rather, as Matthew Arnold so well expressed it, "words flung out" toward great ideas.

Whatever may have been his reason for using this surprising rhetorical figure, it undeniably abounds in the discourses of Jesus. It makes all attempts at consistent literalism hopeless, and it leaves the reader in many cases at a loss for any explanation. Men who are going to argue from the sayings of Jesus and to plead with churches and states to erect those sayings into laws should

first survey the whole field of hyperbole and fix upon some consistent and thorough-going method of treating all. It will not do to select here and there one hyperbole and go literally by that while ignoring a score of others or interpreting them rhetorically. It would be no more unreasonable to take Emerson's motto, "Hitch your wagon to a star," as a prosaic direction to teamsters and to paint it on a board alongside of "Keep to the right," than to take the sublime hyperboles of Jesus for laws.

III

I share with Bishop Doane the conviction that some of the sayings attributed to Jesus in the Gospels are inaccurately reported. But what concerns us here is that neither the Bishop nor anybody takes all of what he believes to be the words of Jesus in their bald literal sense, that most Christians have

always treated a large part of them as figurative and that it is purely a matter of individual judgment which, if any, we shall enforce as practical maxims. Such being the case, the mere opening of the gospels to the utterances of the Master concerning divorce cannot settle for us what should be the law of the church or of the land. Nothing can relieve us from balancing the interests at stake: and in the end we must decide at our peril whether the mere letter of Scripture is the just law for us in America to-day. This is a responsibility which cannot be shirked.

Jesus said, "If any man comes to me and does not *hate* his father and his mother and his wife and his children and his brothers and his sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be a disciple of mine" (Luke xiv. 26). This is most extraordinary language in regard to entrance on a life of love. A young

Christian worker, secretary of a Young Men's Christian Association, once expressed to me a great desire to study the Greek language, and he mentioned this text as a reason. He was sure that the Greek word "to hate" must have some occult meaning not belonging to its English rendering. My positive assurance that hate in Greek was just the same as hate in English left him unconvinced. He could not hate his wife and did not see why Jesus required it.

Jesus said: "There are eunuchs so born from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs so made by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let him who is able to receive it receive it" (Matt. xix. 12). All students of church history know that the greatest of Alexandrian biblical scholars, the illustrious Origen, accepted this passage literally, and

acted upon it. But the church of the third century rejected his interpretation and condemned this "inconsiderate and misdirected heroism," as he himself also did in riper years.

Jesus said: "If your right eye is a snare to you, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is better for you that one of your members should be lost and not your whole body be cast into Gehenna. And if your right hand is a snare to you, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you that one of your members should be lost and not your whole body go into Gehenna" (Matt. v. 29, 30). But no one of us would encourage a young man who, finding temptation through the eye dangerous to purity, should propose to destroy his own sight, or who should, under any circumstances, amputate his right hand. These suggestions of self-mutilation strike us as so manifestly

hyperbolical that we are wholly at a loss to understand the infatuation of the monks and nuns, the penitents and pillar-saints of the centuries of asceticism. Uncounted thousands of Christians could say with Saint Simeon of the pillar:

> "Bear witness, if I could have found a way—
> And heedfully I sifted all my thought—
> More slowly-painful to subdue this home
> Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,
> I had not stinted practice, O my God."

These poor deluded, self-torturing souls thought that they had the authority of Jesus for what they did.

IV

Jesus said, "But I tell you not to resist a wicked man, but if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other: and if any one is determined to sue you for your tunic, let him have your cloak too" (Matt. v. 39, 40). Pacifists never seem to

see that what is commanded here is not mere non-resistance, but active coöperation with our enemies. If any one starts to injure us we are to make it easy for him to do us double the intended injury. To the mass of Christians the thought of allowing the ruffians of the world to seize our property, abuse our wives and children, burn our cities and overthrow our government seems sheer insanity. Bishop Doane would have been among the last to have patience with such a proposition. But the command of non-resistance is in the same discourse with the utterance on divorce, which the Bishop thought that all Christian men should see the danger of not obeying to the letter. Quakers and pacifists generally base their doctrine on this passage. It is to be noted that in the very same paragraph of the Sermon on the Mount with the command for non-resistance comes the command, "To

him who asks give; from him who wishes to borrow of you, do not turn away" (Matt. v. 42). The Quakers have never taken this verse literally. They are well known for thrift and carefully guarded wealth.

There is nothing in the Sermon on the Mount to indicate that one passage is to be taken as literal law and that another is not law. The Quakers simply go by their own judgment. No literalist ever takes all; he falls back upon some bishop, commentator, or ecclesiastical assembly, or just his own judgment, to tell him what is literally binding and what is merely figurative and suggestive.

Papini, whose wonderful *Life of Christ* has awakened thousands to a new love for the Master, has a very warm heart and a very unscientific head. He says that in response to violence there are three possibilities: revenge, flight or turning of the

other cheek. The first is the old barbarous principle which, whether direct by the victim or indirect through agents of the law, only creates an endless chain of mutual wrongs, vendetta leading to vendetta on and on. The second is no better. Flight is indeed worse than fight. He who retires doubles the courage of his enemy. The fugitive invites pursuit. The only way, in spite of its apparent absurdity, is that commanded by Jesus. Offer the other cheek and you will not be struck. Your adversary, who expected resistance, is humiliated, is confused. Every man respects courage, especially moral courage, and is awed by it.

But Papini's three courses are not all that are possible. There is a fourth, namely, to take hold firmly of the wrongdoer and set him down hard. It is not a fact that violent and selfish men are humiliated and reformed when others tamely submit to out-

rage. No sensible man believes that if Governor Coolidge, at the time of the Boston police strike, had given notice that no troops would be called out and that murder, rape and robbery would be allowed to go on unresisted—no one believes that the baser elements of society would have been abashed and reformed.

There is a familiar story of Theodore Roosevelt, how in the old cow-boy days he was in a tavern in Montana and a "bad man" was bullying the whole company and ordered Roosevelt to treat the crowd. The story goes that Roosevelt seemed to yield to the command and stepped forward, but when the ruffian for a moment turned his head Roosevelt by a quick blow knocked him down, disarmed him, and saved the company from a drunken debauch. It is impossible not to feel that this was the truly Christian course. It was better for the bully and

better for everybody. The blow sprang from the genuine kindness of Roosevelt's heart, his regard for the general welfare. There was no selfishness, no disregard of love in it.

V

Jesus said: "I tell you not to swear at all" (Matt. v. 34). He made no exceptions whatever. The Quakers regard themselves as bound by this prohibition of oaths and at the cost of many sufferings have won the privilege of affirmation. But in spite of the precise words of our Lord, most of us think that when Abraham Lincoln solemnly swore to support the Constitution of the United States he did an appropriate thing. His references to this solemn oath recorded on high add to the sublimity of his character. The fact that Jesus, in condemning oaths, made no exception causes us no uneasiness.

Jesus said: "When you make a breakfast or a dinner, do not call your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your rich neighbors, for they may invite you in return and you may be repaid. But when you hold a reception invite poor men, maimed men, lame men, blind men, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, and you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just" (Luke xiv. 12, 13, 14). The language here is exclusive and it covers both breakfasts and dinners. Taken literally it rules out all the pleasant dinner parties among relatives and friends, which constitute so large a part of the relaxation and joy of life. Such an institution as the American Thanksgiving Day dinner, with its reunions of family circles and intimate friends around the fragrant turkey and mince pie, can be no longer countenanced by Christian people. Social feasting is per-

missible only with defectives and dependents.

Jesus said: "Do not call any one on earth Father, for one is your Father in heaven" (Matt. xxiii. 9). Here one of the most tender and beautiful titles in the home is absolutely forbidden. Every time a child says "father" he goes beyond the letter of this command. Every time we lovingly bestow this title on some venerable minister of Christ we disobey the words of the Master.

Jesus said: "It is easier for a camel to enter the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xix. 24). The unwearied attempts of commentators to diminish the size of the "camel" here, or to enlarge the "needle's eye" can only excite a smile. Sometimes we are told that the needle's eye was a small gate through which a camel, by getting down on

his knees, might just squeeze—anything to escape, if possible, the astounding hyperbole.

Jesus said: "Sell what you have and give gifts of mercy" (Luke xii. 33). The notion that a Christian must give away all of his property and enter upon a life of poverty is based upon numerous similar unqualified assertions and commands. Saint Francis of Assisi had the very words of Christ behind him when he took Poverty for his bride. Tolstoi thought it dangerous to go beyond the words of Scripture. If he had not had a rich wife, who was otherwise minded, he might have ended his life in great destitution. The opinion that a Christian should retain his property and administer it for God has to be supported upon implications and inferences and the drapery of some of the parables. Here, as in other matters, the path of wisdom and of duty is not ascer-

tained by any narrow consideration of words but by our own conscientious judgment of what, in our circumstances, our Lord would approve.

Jesus said: "To him who asks give" (Matt. v. 42). He suggested no exceptions. Years ago Josiah Flynt told us that there were in the United States an army of 60,000 idle and depraved tramps supported in their filth and wickedness mainly by the mistaken kindness of Christian women who fed and clothed them at their back doors. Of the folly of thus supporting these worthless and dangerous creatures it is hard to speak with patience. Yet these kind-hearted women were merely acting on the words of Jesus.

Jesus said: "It cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem" (Luke xiii. 33). John the Baptist, the greatest of the prophets, had just perished outside of Jerusalem.

VI

The most perplexing hyperboles of Jesus are those in which he spoke of the power of faith and prayer. He said: "If two of you agree on earth regarding any matter, whatever they pray for will come to them from my Father in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 19). "I tell you truly, if you have faith like a mustard seed you will say to this mountain, 'Remove from here to there,' and it will remove, and nothing will be impossible for you" (Matt. xvii. 20). "If you have faith like a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you" (Luke xvii. 6). Any attempt to consider these promises literally will seem to savor of irreverent levity. Everybody knows that these are figurative. When the Panama Canal was to be dug no one suggested praying that Culebra Hill might be removed out

into some deep part of the Pacific. No one has suggested the building of dams in the western deserts and the planting of trees there by prayer. My mere reference to such things seems like profane caviling. But let us candidly face what is involved in admitting this. If the proposal to take literally certain often-repeated assurances of Jesus is indignantly repelled as jesting about holy things, then is not the claim that we must go by the exact letter of Scripture in other matters very much weakened?

I confess that I am at loss to interpret these limitless promises to prayer. The experience of the best Christians does not confirm them in a literal sense. President Garfield lay dying while all the Christians in America prayed for his recovery with a unanimity never before known in the case of any one man. But he died. The united prayers of the nation were offered again

in the case of President McKinley. His wound did not even begin to heal. Millions die in India and China of plague or of starvation caused by drouth, while all the hundreds of missionaries, men and women of God, if there are such, unite in agonizing prayer for health or rain. Slowly and with infinite anguish the human race creeps forward on the path of progress. Consumption and cancer, ignorance and ferocity stubbornly resist our efforts. One thing is certain after two thousand years of experience; those promises do not mean for us what their words seem to say. The common opinion is that the man who takes the words of Christ literally and does not use anything but prayer for his sick child deserves to be prosecuted for criminal neglect.

One is astonished at the language in which Jesus sometimes spoke of his own purpose and mission on earth. He said:

"I came to cast fire on the earth, and what will I, if it is already kindled?" "Do you think that I came to give peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but dissension" (Luke xii. 49, 51). "Do not think that I came to send peace on the earth, I came not to send peace but a sword" (Matt. x. 34). "He who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one" (Luke xxii. 36). We tell the objector that Jesus in these passages, by a bold rhetorical figure, put the unintended and lamented result for the purpose. What he means is that the wickedness of men will convert his peaceful mission into a *casus belli*. But in so explaining we admit that Jesus did not mean what he said and did not say what he meant.

VII

Even if all thoughtful Christian men were to-day united in a resolute purpose of conformity to the letter of Scripture, the path

of duty would still be far from plain. There would still arise two difficulties. The first is the difficulty occasioned by the lower and the higher criticism in determining just what the letter of Scripture is. Bishop Doane ran upon this difficulty. He said: "There is a grave question and the question is growing graver, whether there is scriptural sanction for dissolving the bond of marriage for any cause whatever." The reason that question is growing graver is that the higher critics are coming more and more to the conclusion that the gospel of Matthew does not give the correct "letter of Scripture" in the matter of divorce.

But the second difficulty is even greater than that which arises from the higher criticism; it is that which arises from our own common sense. We find it impossible to divest ourselves of this and to take a purely mechanical view of quivering human

personalities. Bishop Doane found it so. He went on to say: "But there is no question that the Scriptures do not recognize any cause except adultery as making a divorce possible. In all other cases *it must be only a separation.*" Alas, for literalism! The words of Jesus are, "What God hath yoked together let not man put asunder." He does not use a technical word for divorce but the general word *separate.* This very word here translated "put asunder" is in other places in the King James version rendered *separate.* So what the Bishop allowed "in all other cases" is exactly what the letter of Scripture forbids. The Bishop's common sense would not permit him to be absolutely a literalist.

In spite of his own private conviction, the Bishop seemed willing for the time being to let the general Christian public believe in the gospel of Matthew as it stands and

to permit divorce on the ground of adultery as provided for in the Sermon on the Mount. But here another grave difficulty arises. The Sermon on the Mount contains not only this hyperbolical law regarding divorce but it contains also a hyperbolical definition of adultery. Jesus said: "I say unto you that every one who looks at a woman with lustful thoughts has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matt. v. 28). No civil court would admit evidence as to wanton looks and secret thoughts. Literalism must stop short of this. But this hyperbolical definition of adultery is in the next paragraph to that which includes the assumed legislation of Jesus on the subject. If one paragraph is treated as legislative and the other paragraph is treated as rhetorical it must be wholly on our own responsibility.

If we should all agree to go by the exact letter of Scripture our laws would forbid any

two persons once married ever to part company. That is what the Greek word used by Matthew and Mark means. It is only an accident that the King James translators did not here use the word separate but used the synonym "put asunder." This is manifestly a requirement beyond the power of human nature. Ibsen's play "Ghosts" portrays with all the dreadful vividness of that master of dramatic art the gruesome consequences which may flow from a priest's insistence that an outraged wife shall go on living with a diseased and degenerate husband.

VIII

Jesus is the poorest possible authority for a literalist. He says the most unqualified things and then never seems bound by them. He said: "The scribes and Pharisees have seated themselves on Moses' seat. So whatever they tell you do and observe, but do not

do as they do" (Matt. xxiii 2, 3). He said: "I tell you truly, until heaven and earth pass away not the smallest letter or part of a letter will pass away from the Law, until all is done" (Matt. v. 18). Language could not be more sweeping. Yet face to face with concrete cases Jesus never could be made to do as the scribes said. To Jesus a law was never a formula of words, but it was the ideal aim of the lawgiver. The Sabbath law, "In it thou shalt not do any work" (Exodus xx.10) made no exceptions for deeds of necessity and mercy. The scribes admitted no exception in favor of healing the sick. But Jesus, after the most solemn proclamation that not even the smallest letter of it should pass away, could see in the Fourth Commandment no reason why his hungry disciples should not provide themselves food or why he himself should not go on healing diseases. The presence of the living man

for whose benefit the law was made abrogated, in the eyes of Jesus, all restrictions upon that benefit. Words might take care of themselves; he was thinking of the welfare of men.

The law of Moses prescribed in detail what a Jew might eat and what he might not eat. Jesus in a sentence or two brushed aside two chapters of the Pentateuch "making all meats clean"; and yet he would not admit that a jot or tittle of the law had passed away. When the scribes and Pharisees came into the Temple court dragging a poor woman taken in adultery, they thought that for once Love must side with Hate and that he who had never yet spoken a harsh word about a woman must authorize Cruelty to have its way. The law of Moses was plain. The proof of the crime was indisputable. The penalty prescribed by the law was stoning. But Jesus, with all his posi-

tiveness about the least commands of the law, could see no reason, in those circumstances, why that poor woman should be stoned. There was no one fit to stone her.

The notion that the interests of certain individuals must be sacrificed in order that the community may live under good general rules finds no support from Jesus. The sanctity of marriage and of the home in Jerusalem did not, in his judgment, require the crushing of that wretched victim of man's lust. Perhaps in present conditions the State must content itself with the imperfect justice of general rules. But there is something out of character when Christian ministers, in the name of Jesus, cry out for laws more inexorable and undiscriminating. If Jesus were present in one of our court-rooms to-day, and a broken-hearted girl should come in pleading for release from some syphilitic brute unfit to be a husband, one

whom God never joined to her, and if these supposed defenders of the home stood around and insisted like Shylock upon the very letter of the bond—a fate worse for the poor girl than stoning—may we not believe that the Master would say again: "Neither do I sentence you. Go in peace"?

IX

To what point has our investigation brought us? To the conclusion that the teachings of Jesus have no value? Far from it. They have an infinite value. But they lie in a plane above that of legislation. Laws must be adjusted to their times. Ideals are like stars. Jesus did not say that Moses made a mistake in giving to the ancient Hebrews a loose divorce law such as their hardness of heart made alone workable. He said that that was not a good enough law for his followers. It does

not appear that Scripture contains ready-made rules for our use. In laying down maxims for individual conduct and laws for church and state we are bound only to the application of the spirit of Christ to the interests involved. The belief of some Christians that they have a divine sanction for their particular personal judgments is a most serious misfortune for us all. It obstructs candid investigation and courteous discussion.

The Christian sentiment of thoughtful men is already preponderant that, in regard to oaths, war, poor-relief, and a multitude of matters, we cannot throw off the responsibility of acting upon our own best judgment in view of existing conditions. The hyperbolical utterances of Jesus on these subjects are not looked upon as requiring or even justifying, a mechanical conformity to the letter of Scripture. Is it too much to

hope that a day will come when all good men will lay aside their claims to infallibility, and when ecclesiastical bodies will cease to clamor for the enforcement of "the scriptural rules" regarding divorce, or war, or anything else? In that good time, all thoughtful and earnest men, meeting in the forum of fraternal debate, with the modesty becoming those consciously liable to mistake, and the courage of those strong to do the right as God gives to them to see the right, will, by courteous comparison of arguments based upon existing facts, reach such harmony in practical legislation as shall secure kindness and justice and shall promote progress toward the ever unattainable ideals of Jesus.

ST. PAUL'S WAY OF REASONING

IV

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I

Most American Christians now in middle or later life were trained in childhood to believe not only that Paul's Christianity was from God, but that also his philosophy of it was equally divine and that his arguments were communicated to him from the divine mind. We regarded him as a titanic logician. We always opened his writings with four unquestioned assumptions: first, that Paul's reasonings were everywhere sound and self-consistent; second, that Paul's theology was the same as that of Jesus; third, that it was harmonious with that of every other

sacred writer; and fourth, that it was the same as the creed of our own denomination.

But historical and literary studies have now become so general in schools and colleges that every Sunday-school includes some young people who cannot avoid seeing what is on a printed page before them. The time has come when teachers cannot refuse to discriminate frankly between Paul's religion and his logic, and to admit that the logic belongs to the first century while the religion belongs to all the centuries and to eternity. So to discriminate will cost many elderly Christians the keenest pain. It violates their holiest habits. It seems to them like nothing but colossal and profane conceit.

Nevertheless the necessity of discrimination is inexorable. Every great man of the past was part of iron and part of clay. Our college Sophomores, in reading the Phaedo, are divided between admiration and

wonder—admiration for the moral grandeur of Socrates, and wonder at the futility of the arguments that sustained his faith in the soul's immortality. Students of church history always distinguish two aspects of Martin Luther; on the one hand is the great soul that rediscovered the freeness of salvation, on the other is the rude and violent son of the German miner of the 15th century. Only a theological theory has hitherto prevented our dealing so with St. Paul, and popular intelligence has now reached such a point that we must begin to discriminate or leave his epistles wholly out of the curriculum of religious education.

Paul knew what Christianity is by an inward experience of its life-giving power. He had escaped from the world of "the flesh" into the world of "the spirit." He had thrown off the yoke of Pharisaism. He was joined to Christ in a union so close that it

seemed practical identification. Out of the mellow soil of his new heart sprang spontaneously love, joy, peace, slowness to anger, kindness, benevolence, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, just as of old the fruits of the uncursed earth grew unforced in Paradise. He had a perfect ideal of what a Christian man should be in humility, sweetness, sympathy, helpfulness, generosity, heroism. Jesus had revealed to him this new life and the Holy Spirit had begotten it in him and had endowed him with the power of communicating it to others.

But when Paul came to philosophize about the Christian life—to do the work not of an apostle but of a theologian—he fell back perforce upon the resources supplied by his early education. His spiritual life he had received from Jesus. His biblical exegesis, his psychology, his metaphysics, and his dialectics he had learned from the rabbis,

with more or less help from the Greek and Alexandrian philosophic thought which then pervaded the world. We must hold fast to Paul's religion. We must reverently leave his theology in its historical place among the strange constructions of the mighty thinkers of the past. Too long have young seekers after Christian truth wandered faint through clewless labyrinths built by the alumnus of Gamaliel's college in Jerusalem. The pious university student who with the keen mental habits of to-day addresses himself to the task of following Paul's train of thought through such an epistle as that to the Galatians stands aghast at what he finds. The danger is that meeting so much that belongs to the childhood of thinking he may rashly conclude that all is childish. This would be to suffer irreparable loss. The only safety lies in a full explanation by the teacher at the outset that with Paul, as with

Plato and with Luther, the golden treasure is in an earthen jar, and that to have spiritual life is one thing and to be able to explain the philosophy of the religious history of race and of the individual is another—and far less important—thing.

II

The epistle to the Galatians is an argument poured forth in an outburst of emotion. Swept along by the torrent of the apostle's passion, awed by his thunders and dazzled by the lightning flashes of his rebukes and invectives, uncritical readers pity the Galatians and even St. Peter. They share Paul's amazement at errors so egregious. But afterwards, in trying to recall just what the fault of Peter and the Galatians was, and just what the proofs were that it *was* a fault, a difficulty is met with that amounts to an impossibility.

As nearly as we can make out, the Galatians had accepted the idea that Christians should continue to obey the laws supposedly given by God to his ancient people. This was their fault and their folly. There are in the epistle two main arguments to prove them wrong. The first is the formal argument that the revelation made to Paul supersedes every other source of information past or contemporary. The second is the material argument that to obey any law of God now is to give up the scheme of "Righteousness by Faith" and is to "fall from grace." The longer one reflects upon this proposition and these two arguments, the profounder becomes his amazement and the more complete his discouragement.

Paul sadly prejudices his case from beginning to end, as Martin Luther often does, by the violence of his manner. In the torrent, tempest and whirlwind of his passion

he fails to acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. Barely finishing his salutation, he springs upon his readers with the words, "I am astonished that you are so quickly changing over from him who called you by the grace of Christ to a different kind of good news."

The "change" was not so much to be marvelled at, seeing that apostles had fallen into it, and that the Christian church had not then, and has not even yet, thought itself clear upon the question.

Again he vociferates, "O thoughtless Galatians, who has bewitched you?"

Such an appeal does not conciliate. This is not the mood in which spiritual truth is best perceived or communicated. In his excitement Paul swears to the fact that he saw only Peter and James in Jerusalem. Possibly the affidavit is intended to cover the whole narrative of his isolation from all

of those best qualified to tell him about the gospel. In either case an oath was superfluous. It was contrary to the teachings of Jesus. Worst of all, he begins the argument with a twice repeated curse upon the late teachers of the Galatians and, quite gratuitously, includes in the sweep of the curse any possible misbehaving angel from heaven. It was unnecessary thus hypothetically to defy those sinless ministrants. Oaths and curses have no proper place in argument. Who that has caught anything of the spirit of Jesus and has learned from him to call no man father or rabbi or master, can look upon a cursing apostle with anything but shame and sorrow?

III

The earliest Christians were Jews or Jewish proselytes. To them Christianity was simply the continuation and perfection

of their old religion. So far as it changed anything it was only as the blossom passes noiselessly into the ripened fruit. They moved on, as the Teacher himself had done, with no antagonism to the ancient customs, though conscious that the fuller current of their spiritual life often swept out of the old banks. But as soon as pagans began to be converted and to enter the church directly from the outside, without passing through the intermediate stage of Jewish proselytism, a new question was presented. How much of Jewish law and custom were they bound to? Over this question the infant church fitfully and confusedly puzzled, but never settled it. Down to the present day no settlement has been reached, not even a clear statement of the question.

Most Protestant Christians, indeed, suppose that Paul by his masterful logic settled

it definitely in the negative. But when pressed for a statement what it was that was settled in the negative, they are at a loss for an answer. The whole Old Testament was taken over into the Christian Bible and the commands of the old Law have often been placed on a par with those of Jesus himself.

Certain teachers (who seem to have come from the circle gathered about the apostles in Jerusalem) had appeared in Galatia maintaining that Christians were still "under the Law." And the Galatians had, apparently with prompt docility, adopted circumcision, the Sabbath, the other feasts and fasts, the distinction of clean and unclean meats, and the rest of "the customs." At the news of this new departure Paul is wholly unable to contain himself. The most awful curses, the keenest sarcasms, fail adequately to express him.

If the error of the Galatians was that of

attaching too much importance to Jewish forms and ceremonies, several lines of argumentation were open to Paul. He might have claimed that he was well acquainted with the other apostles, that his gospel was identical with theirs, and that he was in a position to assure the Galatians that the teaching of these professed representatives of Jerusalem Christianity was, in fact, without apostolic sanction. Or, advancing on another line, it would have been easy to prove that the Jewish rabbis had built up an intolerable "hedge about the law," and that Pharisaism was not the true religion of the Old Testament. Jesus had done this with consummate skill. In a few luminous words he had made plain the difference between the commandment of God, "Honor thy father and thy mother," and the tradition of the elders, regarding consecrated gifts. Peter, who is supposed to

have related this to Mark, could have taught the same to Paul. The obvious distinction would have freed the Galatians at a stroke. If again the error was not Pharisaism but exaggerated emphasis upon things really in the Old Testament, there still remained the example and teaching of Jesus who had led the way in disregarding outgrown externalities for the sake of spiritual realities. Jesus had pointed out that, although certain meats are forbidden in the Law, yet, since they merely pass through the alimentary canal, they cannot defile the man religiously.

IV

No such commonplace plan as one of these commended itself to Paul. He was determined on measures far more radical. In order to subvert the very foundation of the influence of the new teachers he proposed to set aside the authority of all the other

apostles (whom these teachers seem to have claimed to represent) and to present himself —Paul—to the Galatians as their only direct, pure and sufficient channel of divine revelation. He will not deny to the others a limited legitimacy—in a distant sphere—but he will show that the chief of them had much to learn from him, while he—Paul—has nothing to learn from anybody. Having thus annihilated all the authority of the apostolic teachers of these false teachers, he will advance upon the matter of their teachings with equal destructiveness. With one stroke he will sweep away not only Pharisaism, not only the temporary and external features of Mosaism, but every vestige of the law of God, past and present. The Galatians will thus be left absolutely free from every authority—except that of Paul.

The first long section of the argument is devoted to an autobiographical narrative

intended to establish the independence and sufficiency of Paul's revelation. He had excelled in Judaism before he became a Christian. No one knows better than he all that that system has to offer. But he long ago intelligently and finally discarded it. Upon his conversion he might have turned for instruction in Christianity to the older apostles, but he did not. He "did not consult with flesh and blood" but went away alone into Arabia. After three years he did see a little of Peter and of James. Then he let fourteen years elapse before he went near them again. On the whole he never learned anything essential in Jerusalem; rather he had to fight valiantly for liberty and truth.

As to the exact importance of those "who were regarded as pillars" in the Jerusalem church he never cared to make an investigation. It was no matter to him. These, we may note in passing, were the men whom

Jesus had chosen for his constant companions and whom he had trained and specially commissioned as his witnesses. Of one of them our Lord is reported to have said, "Upon this rock I will build my church." But Paul mentions that when this great apostle came into his territory he—Paul—found it necessary to give him fundamental instruction both in the theory and practice of Christianity. What he wants the Galatians to understand is that they may safely, yea, far more wisely, ignore all teachers but himself. It is the Caliph's principle that what others have of truth is superfluous and what they have else is erroneous.

The Galatians must have found themselves unable to admit the force of this argument. It proved too much. We may fancy them as saying, "Why, Paul, we cannot dismiss so lightly the claims of the

chosen companions of our Lord. It is for you to show that you agree with *them*. If there is any difference we shall hold with the men whom Jesus trained and commissioned."

This is, of course, the answer that we of to-day make. We cannot at a word from Paul toss aside together the Pharisaism of Jerusalem, the historic Judaism of Jerusalem, and the apostolic Christianity of Jerusalem, in the spirit that burned the Alexandrian library. Students will observe that Paul's representation of his early relations with the other apostles and with Judean Christianity is in contradiction to that of the book of Acts. But this is a matter that has no bearing upon his logic. His first great argument is that he is an absolutely independent and trustworthy—and the only absolutely trustworthy—exponent of unadulterated Christianity.

V

Paul's second great argument is that the law of God has no longer binding force upon the Christian, and that, in fact, observance of any part of it is practical relinquishment of faith in Christ. To make this clear Paul unfolds his theory of the "Plan of Salvation." Rhetorically this is introduced with admirable skill by a natural transition. The first great argument—that Paul is an independent, infallible and sufficient exponent of the purest Christianity—reached its climax in the story of Peter's failure in theory and practice at Antioch. But the point upon which Peter is alleged to have gone wrong then—conforming to Jewish customs to please visitors from Jerusalem—is the very point upon which the Galatians are going wrong now. And the argument then addressed to Peter is the central message of this epistle. Paul knew better

than Peter regarding the essense of the gospel—the very matter now in question.

But to the "Plan." The law was given on Mt. Sinai to Moses through angels. It was an experiment in righteousness through perfect obedience. But the result was inevitable failure on the part of the Jews. Paul does not say whether this was because they could not, or would not, keep it. He never exactly raises the question whether man *can* keep God's law. But he treats it as self-evident that no man *does* keep it and every one who is under law is a law-breaker. The law required the capital punishment of the criminal Jesus hung upon the tree and died. He bore the curse, the penalty of the law. All who through faith are identified with him have been crucified with him. They have died under the law, and hence to the law. Consequently they have passed on into another life beyond law's jurisdiction.

They must obey law no longer. To obey a law is to give up the whole "Plan."

An illustration may help to an understanding of Paul's conception. Suppose that I am a citizen of Massachusetts and that I have committed murder. In the due course of justice I am arrested, tried, convicted, condemned and executed. Now the law asks no more; it does not even claim obedience. I am in a world beyond the jurisdiction of the commonwealth of Massachusetts and where its laws have no demands. So the Christian, dead with Christ, is forever beyond the realm of God's laws.

Paul urged this argument, in all its rigor, upon Peter at Antioch. The only ground of the Christian's hope, he said, is Christ's death. By that he has been released from the claims of the law. Now to obey law is to acknowledge the legitimacy of its claim. It is to rebuild that which by the act of

faith in Christ I once destroyed. I become again an accursed sinner awaiting execution. On the platform of faith or on the platform of works—one or the other—I must stand. I cannot have a foot on each. Peter abstains now from eating pork in obedience to the law. This is an admission that the law still holds him and that he is bound to have a perfect legal righteousness. The logic of this, if Peter could only see it, is to renounce all faith in a crucified Redeemer. Furthermore it constructively declares that Gentiles can be saved only by becoming Jews.

VI

Paul's fatal difficulty here is that he has not defined his principal term, Law. He uses it in several different senses and repeatedly argues from what is true of it, or claimed for it, in one sense to a conclusion in a different sense, thus committing the logical

fallacy of ambiguity. He holds up his own example in discarding Judaism, although preëminent in it, when he became a Christian. This implies that Pharisaism is the same as the law. To Paul's mind it undoubtedly was. He never made that distinction which Jesus made between tradition and the law of God. What he had learned at the feet of Gamaliel was identical in his thought with that which the angels gave to Moses on Mt. Sinai. At one point in the argument it appears that there was no law at all in the world until four hundred and thirty years after the time of Abraham. All of the obligations of law originated at so late a date in history that they cannot impair the validity of the contract with Abraham, a contract based wholly upon faith. Christ's death redeemed the Galatians from the law; yet they were never under it; it was only a school text-book

of weak and beggarly rudiments, an educational incident in the national history of the Jews. The Gentiles are warned not to keep it: yet they must love, and in loving they will fulfill the whole of it. All who lived under the law in the past were pronounced righteous, if so pronounced at all, by faith. David and Habakkuk proclaimed this. Those, however, who now admit the law's authority can do so only by giving up faith. They must remain under a curse. Paul himself made a preëminent success in keeping it, being found blameless; but at the same time he was under its curse and in uniting with Christ he destroyed it. Truly the head swims in following these dissolving views.

Some say that Paul in Galatians is arguing that external, ceremonial works cannot justify men. The law he opposes is the ceremonial law. But this cannot be so. It was surely the law under which Christ

died from which Paul thinks that we are freed. He cannot have thought that that was the ceremonial law. But if Christ died under the criminal law, how can that fact relieve us from those hygienic regulations and those religious observances which divine wisdom formerly imposed? Paul says, "The whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Did he not think that Christ died to save men from sins against the law of love? If we may judge by his Old Testament quotations he was not thinking alone of the ritual law. The words "Cursed is everyone who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them" are not taken from a passage that treats of ritual. They form the conclusion of a list of rules for neighborly kindness and sexual purity. And the words "He that doeth them shall

live by them" preface a list of prohibitions of incest and grosser impurities. But, in truth, Paul never divided the law into ritual, moral and other portions. It was all one to him and he could think of no way to get rid of any part of it except to get rid of the whole of it.

Thus it appears that in this famous epistle the apostle has no clear proposition before his mind, and that of his two great arguments, one is without value and the other is without meaning. What he wanted to do is plain enough, and it was a glorious aim. He wanted to save the Gentiles from the narrowness of current Judaism and to make sure for them that spiritual liberty which Jesus had opened to himself. But his education as a Jerusalem lawyer made it impossible for him to reach his aim by the pathway of immediate intuition in the manner of Jesus.

VII

In his use of the Old Testament Paul was thoroughly rabbinic. Scholarship had not yet thought of placing itself in imagination back at the viewpoint of an ancient author and then interpreting his words in their historic sense. Texts were made to prove whatever the interpreter's fancy could hang upon their words.

Paul found in the 15th chapter of Genesis the statement that Abraham "believed in Jehovah and he reckoned it to him for righteousness." Paul took the word righteousness as, in the terminology of logicians, "distributed," that is, covering the whole ground. Accordingly he reasoned that one act of belief met in full all of Abraham's obligations and would meet ours. If Paul had happened to read the 106th Psalm, instead of the passage in Genesis, he would have found that, on a certain historic occa-

sion, Phinehas transfixed two offenders and "that was reckoned unto him for righteousness." The very same words are used, and by the same logic Paul might with equal force have argued that all that God requires of us is once to transfix a pair of evildoers. All that the phrase really meant in either case was that God approved the act. It did not mean that God required nothing more.

It takes our breath away to find that Habakkuk's famous utterance, "The righteous shall live by his faith,"—the watchword not only of Paul but also of Luther and of all Protestantism—was not meant by the prophet to say what Paul thinks. So far as the verse bears on the point at all it makes for the opposite view. The Revised Version gives in the margin the true meaning, "in his faithfulness." The Hebrew word which Paul here translates *faith* is not an uncommon one. It occurs in the Old Testament

about fifty times. Its exact meaning is *faithfulness*, and it is oftener used to denote an attribute of God himself than of men. In only one passage does either the Authorized or the Revised Version render it *faith*, namely, in this particular passage of Habakkuk, and here manifestly only out of deference to Paul. It is just as impossible to say what Paul meant by "faith" as to say what he meant by "law." It seems impossible that he can have meant mere belief; but if he meant trustful obedience that would make faith the same as its antithesis, works.

VIII

The expression "righteousness by faith" is original with Paul, and scholars have never been able to agree what he meant by either term of it. Jesus had taught that God forgives penitent sinners. The idea in so simple a form was beyond Paul's power

of apperception. God's law had been broken. No criminal could be forgiven so long as that law continued to exist. So, in Paul's theory, the law was killed, abolished, by the hanging of Jesus. "Now," said Paul, "the sinner can be forgiven, since he is in a realm outside of law." But no: the lawyer could not get free of the law, though it was dead to him and he was dead to it. Still the sinner must be "declared righteous." He must have some "righteousness." But we see that these are legal terms. They have no meaning where law is not. A "righteousness apart from law" is a contradiction in terms. It is like weight in a world without gravitation or color in a world of darkness. Apart from law, righteousness is inconceivable. In the presence of law, to declare a sinner righteous is impossible. Surely there was no need for any of these legal fictions. When a penitent prodigal comes to himself

and resolves to return to his heavenly Father, confess all and begin a life of new obedience to his law, that prodigal cannot be declared righteous; he can only be forgiven. Paul's antithesis of faith and works is wholly imaginary.

Paul viewed Christ's death as a transaction under criminal law. Christ became a curse for us by hanging, like a criminal, on a tree. Paul is not here thinking of Jesus' death as a sacrifice. No sacrifice was hung on a tree. No sacrifice was accursed.

The student may well ask by what logic the death of Christ could be viewed as occurring under Jewish law at all. It was an atrocious crime. Malice, venality, falsehood, cowardice, and brutality united in it. It was a defiance of all righteousness. It was an insult to God. By what logic could the brutal murder of an innocent person by

the Romans meet the demands of the Jewish law for the death of criminals and so free the Galatians from the obligation to keep the Sabbath and abstain from eating pork?

According to Paul himself the principle of righteousness by faith had been already set forth in the Old Testament. It was earlier than the law and therefore the law could not impair it. The Old Testament writers had been saved under it, yet these had also all lived and died under the law. There was therefore nothing in the principle of faith incompatible with the idea that God had established a certain régime for the outward life of his people. Circumcision, according to Paul, was merely "a seal of the righteousness of faith." Why, then, was it that if the Galatians should receive it, they would give up the righteousness of faith?

IX

Paul's theory of the religious history of the world is original. It is fully stated in the epistle to the Romans; in Galatians he omits all reference to Adam and the earlier ages and begins with Abraham. The Scripture declares that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. The plan of righteousness by faith was revealed to him and through him promised to all nations. Four hundred and thirty years later at Mt. Sinai the angels gave the law to Moses. This was an experiment in righteousness by works. But when we open the Pentateuch, we find there a variety of codes consisting of religious and moral precepts, military, civil and criminal statutes, ecclesiastical rubrics, sanitary and hygienic regulations, evidently the accumulation of centuries.

That this heterogeneous mass of material was ever revealed at one time by angels as

an experiment in righteousness by works is an idea without a shadow of foundation. It is an idea that was not held by the poets and prophets of the Old Testament. They were unanimous in proclaiming mercy to humble and contrite hearts simply on the ground of God's lovingkindness. The notion that the Jewish nation had tried a great experiment in seeking righteousness by works was the creation of Paul's imagination.

The dilemma that men must either show a record of immaculate obedience to God's law or else ignore that law altogether is gratuitous and unthinkable. The real reason why the Galatians were not to obey some of the ancient laws of God's people was not that henceforth all law was at an end, but only because "new occasions teach new duties," and because the old mechanical notion of God's authorship of Jewish laws was a mistake. Jesus disposed of the whole difficulty

by an epigram when he said that the new wine of Christianity could not be put into the old bottles of Judaism.

X

In the course of the argument upon the relations of the law and faith, occurs that much debated passage upon the force of the word *offspring*. Paul says, "But the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, 'And to offsprings,' as meaning many; but as if meaning one, 'and to your offspring,' who is Christ."

The argument is that since the word offspring in the promise is in the singular number, not the plural, it must refer to a single individual, namely Christ. Consequently only those who by faith are made one with him can be justified and saved. Many of the most devoted followers of the great

apostle have flinched from defending his logic here. St. Jerome said that to the Galatians whom he had just called fools, Paul became himself a fool. The most obvious difficulty is that the word offspring is a collective noun both in Hebrew and Greek, just as it is in English, and so the singular denotes many. A second difficulty is that in Genesis the promise to Abraham is repeatedly declared to be that his offspring shall be as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is upon the sea shore. The third difficulty is that the promise said nothing at all about righteousness, but affirmed that this numerous offspring should possess the land of Canaan.

Paul's argument about the "Mediator" is too briefly stated to be intelligible. It runs thus "The law was arranged through angels by the hand of a mediator. A mediator does not belong to one person, but God is

one." It is said that more than four hundred explanations of this obscurity have been proposed. Could there be a more striking proof of the elusiveness of the apostle's reasonings?

Commentators are not agreed whether the reference to Abraham's wives in the fourth chapter is meant for an argument at all. Paul calls it "an allegory," but it seems like an attempt at argument from analogy. Abraham had two wives, one a slave girl and the other a free woman. The slave girl represents Mount Sinai and Jerusalem: the free woman represents heaven. That is, the slave girl represents the historic religion of the children of the free woman. The free woman represents Christianity. So Christians are not bound to obey any of the laws given to the Jewish church. It is impossible to place such an allegory under any classification of logic or rhetoric.

XI

In the realm of practice, Paul's logic is as difficult to follow as in the realm of theory. Peter found this so at Antioch when he made his unfortunate experiment with Paul's principle of being "all things to all men." Paul's own naïve statement of the principle may be found in his First Epistle to the Corinthians: "Everything that is sold in market eat, raising no questions of conscience, 'for the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof.' If any one of the unbelievers invites you and you wish to go: eat whatever is set before you, raising no questions of conscience. But if any one says to you, 'This is meat that has been sacrificed,' do not eat, for the sake of him who mentioned it and for conscience' sake."

Nothing could be plainer in theory. A Christian may eat anything he likes, but if the conscience of someone present is offended,

the Christian must abstain. In practice, however, such a course is sure to bring sooner or later the charge of dissimulation. So Peter found to his grief. And, curiously enough, the man of all the world to make the accusation was Paul himself. "Before certain persons came from James"—that is, from the mother church in Jerusalem where of course Jewish customs were scrupulously followed by all—Peter "was eating with the Gentiles. But when they came he drew back and separated himself"—precisely according to the wording of the rule; but only to bring upon himself an avalanche of reproach not only for dissimulation but for virtually teaching that Gentiles must live as Jews and, worse still, giving up for both Jews and Gentiles the hope of salvation through Christ. What Peter thought of this outburst we are nowhere told; but it is easy to guess.

XII

At this point I imagine some distressed reader exclaiming "Oh! of course Paul was not a logician after the Aristotelian pattern. He was a poet, a mystic, a revealer of the Christian life. He soars far above and out of sight of your petty pedantry of Hebrew philology and syllogistic formulae."

That, is precisely my contention. It is to that conclusion that I have hoped to bring you. Paul's "magnificent dialectic," so often unintelligently lauded, has been a delusion. His terms are often undefinable, his arguments futile, his biblical exegesis impossible, his interpretation of the world's religious history wholly mistaken. Yet his consciousness of spiritual life received from Christ and his sublime sense of spiritual freedom will make his writings forever the object of eager study. The students of the future will not stop, as Augustine, Luther,

and so many others have stopped, with the surface of Paul, where the confusions are. They will place him in his time and, allowing for the imperfections of that time, will rejoice to know a spiritual life so profound.

In this epistle some of the sublimest truths are enunciated in words that can never lose their splendor. Here is that matchless statement of the ineluctable natural law of moral cause and effect: "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked; what a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will from the flesh reap decay; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap life eternal." And here is that statement of the universal and eternal law of moral obligation, "For the whole law is summed up in one word: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." These laws not even the death of Christ could change.

XIII

A distinguished college President said to me, "If you convince our young people that Paul's reasonings are fallacious you will destroy their confidence in him as a religious leader."

But to train men to discriminate between the essential and the non-essential is precisely the reason why colleges exist. An educated man should be "a judge of things that differ," to use Paul's own language. The bane of the uneducated is that what they do not reject they swallow whole. Partisanship, undiscriminating loyalty or undiscriminating prejudice, blinds the masses of men and vetoes progress.

The whole heated controversy over "Fundamentalism" springs from the fact that so many good people cannot hold to the real fundamentals of the religion of Jesus and let go of the accidental drapery of the first

century. Just as on the other hand many people have rejected that drapery and with it have lost their Christian faith. The colleges and universities must teach the masses how to make the tremendous transition from the undiscriminating to the discriminating view; for unless they can make it, religion in America, like a great ship crossing the bar, will be wrecked.

Saint Paul's address to the elders of the Ephesian church is one of the great milestones in the progress of the human race. Nothing that ever happened at Ephesus can compare in importance with his three years' residence there. For the first time in history a man came to Ephesus who was utterly unselfish, tender as a mother, free from all race prejudice, eager to serve strangers, not above hard manual work, victorious over his own passions, fearless as a lion, full of the joy of spiritual freedom and conscious im-

mortality. Nobody in all Asia Minor had ever before conceived of the possibility of such a personality. We cannot afford to lose touch with him. Neither can we afford, just because he is so great and essential, to confuse mankind forever with his rabbinic theories. If Christianity is to spread to all the nations our foreign missionaries must be able to assure the thinking men of non-Christian lands that Paul's theology is no part of the message of Jesus.

THE SURPRISING EXPERIENCES
OF BISHOP COLENSO

V

THE SURPRISING EXPERIENCES OF BISHOP COLENSO

I

They were as amusing as comic opera; and yet to the Bishop they were tragic throughout; and his part in them was purely heroic, as heroic as that of any Christian martyr who ever faced lions in the arena.

Yes, among the heroes who wrought for Bible truth and righteousness in the nineteenth century Bishop Colenso's name will forever hold an unquestioned place in the front rank. Still, one cannot help smiling; each scene in the tragedy was so whimsical and the grave and solemn actors were so

astonished at the obvious. The comedy, as in Mark Twain's "Connecticut Yankee at the Court of King Arthur," was in showing a man in advance of his time, in a community upon whom some plain truths had not yet dawned.

No story has more solid lessons for us in these days of "Fundamentalism"; for the five undeniable facts which Colenso ran against with such a succession of shocks are precisely the five facts to which, with shuddering repugnance, the majority of the Christian public of England and America have been refusing to open their eyes during the forty-two years since the good Bishop died. These five facts are merely the consequences of the one fact that Christianity is a dynamic and not a static religion.

It was in 1853 that John William Colenso, then Vicar of Forncett St. Mary, in Norfolk, England, was appointed missionary bishop

of Natal, Africa. He was a Cambridge university man and the author of a widely used series of text-books of arithmetic and algebra. He had the typical English matter of fact common sense, but joined with it the sensitive conscience and self-forgetful devotion of a missionary. Going far away from the centers of intellectual leadership to do an elementary work for barbarians, the presumption was that he would never be heard of by the great world again.

Of all living men a bishop of the Church of England may be looked upon as holding a peculiarly secure and happy position. He is a gentleman and a scholar, a man of great social "admittance," a man of religion, a man of affairs. The pious revere him, the worldly respect him. The grandeur of the cathedral is about him. He partakes of the permanence of the Church "a thousand years the same" and the strength of the empire

which encircles the globe. A missionary bishop in an English province goes to a lower race. His work is all *de haut en bas.* He hands down the truth from his superior position to be unquestioningly received by his grateful inferiors. Laborious his work may be in fatherly ministrations, in confirmations, in ordinations, and full of cares incident to the founding of schools, orphanages and hospitals and the building of churches; but with the ancient church and the empire behind him he is as free from fundamental perplexities as any man on earth.

II

Bishop Colenso found all this to be the reverse of the truth. Life in Africa to him was a succession of incredible transformations and surprises. As in *opéra bouffe*, every venerable person and thing, at some point, suddenly threw off disguise and danced away

to the back of the stage. That the brave bishop kept a clear head and a Christian temper and filled out his life's natural measure with faithful services to whites and blacks is what makes the story not a comedy but an epic.

After reaching his field of missionary labor, the Bishop's first task was to master the Zulu language, prepare a grammar and a dictionary of it, and begin the translation of the Bible. In this work he was aided by natives, and here his troubles began. To quote his own words, "While translating the story of the flood, I have had a simple-minded but intelligent native—one with the docility of a child, but the reasoning powers of mature age—look up and ask, 'Is this all true? Do you really believe that all this happened thus—that all the beasts and birds and creeping things upon the earth, large and small, from hot countries and cold, came

thus by pairs and entered the ark with Noah? And did Noah gather food for them all, for beasts and birds of prey as well as for the rest?'

"My heart answered in the words of the Prophet, 'Shall a man speak lies in the name of the Lord?' I dared not do so."

This was the first time it had occurred to the Bishop that the men whom he had come to teach might have something to teach *him*. It was the first time that such a thought had occurred to any Englishman. When the incident came to be related in England it excited every kind of emotion from indignation to boisterous merriment. Pride of race revolted at the suggestion that a "nigger" could teach a white man; pride of Church scouted the notion that a neophyte could enlighten a bishop. Colenso's "intelligent Zulu" became and remained for years a mirth-compelling jest for all England.

It was gleefully said that the Bishop had gone to convert the heathen and had been himself converted to heathenism.

III

The first surprise was in being taught by a black man; the second was in *what* was taught, namely the incredibility of many Bible stories. This "intelligent Zulu" was the first man whom the Bishop had ever seen look at the Bible with the simplicity of a three years' child and not through the smoke of incense. The view of the Bible then prevailing in England, among both clergy and laity, was that expressed by Dean Burgon: "The Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne! Every book of it—every chapter of it—every verse of it—every syllable of it—(Where are we to stop?) every letter of it—is the direct utterance of the Most High! The Bible is

none other than the Word of God—not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike, the utterance of Him who sitteth upon the throne—absolute—faultless—unerring—supreme!"

The Bishop had come to Africa without a doubt that "the Bible was the religion of Protestants"; and now the Bible deliquesced in his hands. Genesis presented difficulties enough but the worst came in the book of Exodus. The making of arithmetics had sharpened the Bishop's eyes for "sums." Every story in Exodus presented a "sum" in arithmetic which when ciphered out gave a preposterous answer. Thus, the Israelites celebrated the passover the night before they left Egypt; figure out the number of lambs required; they could not be less than 150,000; this requires a flock of 2,000,000 sheep; these sheep would require 400,000 acres of grazing land. Could a population

scattered over such a territory have been warned to keep the feast, have kept it, and then have been warned again and have started on their journey—all in one night? The first volume of Colenso's work on the Pentateuch, issued in 1862, was mainly concerned with these "sums." The inference which his calculations forced upon him was that the stories were absolutely unhistorical.

IV

There was something beautiful, yes childlike, in the way in which Colenso took the religious public into his confidence and told the story of his missionary life, his search for truth, his misgivings, his heart sinkings, his final resolve to follow the gleam wherever it might lead. It is impossible to conceive a book better fitted to disarm prejudice and win sympathy. But upon its appearance nothing could be heard but denuncia-

tions and laughter. The Bishop of Capetown promptly deposed and excommunicated him—though this was later pronounced void by the courts. Here was Colenso's third great surprise—the learned, pious and dignified leaders of religion in England and America could not calmly discuss a new truth and they forgot even the common courtesies of debate. Many showed exactly the temper of Caiaphas. And, thinking this affair over, I have formed a milder opinion about Caiaphas; his sin was not wholly without palliation. There must be some great natural inability in the minds of religious leaders in the presence of new truth.

To any one with a sense of humor the reading of these early replies to Colenso's book is vastly amusing; only there is a great deal too much of the stuff—enough to fill an alcove in the library. Professor William Henry Green of Princeton Theological

Seminary was then one of the pillars of piety and biblical learning in America, a man revered and beloved. He rushed into print with a book which one of sardonic spirit may read with delight in its confusions of logic and ebullitions of emotion; but to see a good man floundering "like a wild bull in a net" is, except to a sardonic mind, too painful. What especially excited Dr. Green's contempt was Colenso's employment of so childish a weapon as arithmetic. "The Bishop proposes by *arithmetic* to overthrow the Mosaic record. Where antiquities, philology, astronomy, geology and ethnology have failed, let us see what arithmetic can do!" There is something delicious in this biting sarcasm; at the mere thought of arithmetic the Professor bursts into a roar which takes the place of reasoned answer. "These questions of pedigree, chronology and populations," exclaims Dr. Green, "or greater

trivialities still, with which the book is taken up—what conceivable connection have they with the material facts of the history?" Still, chronology and populations have generally been supposed to have something to do with the material facts of history and before long we find Dr. Green declaring that Colenso must not deceive himself into thinking that he can give up his faith in the historical details of the Pentateuch and retain any part of his Christian hope. "The question is one of life or death. We will not, we cannot, give up our faith in the Bible." So felt Professor Green and so felt the vast bulk of the English-speaking religious world sixty years ago. How childish was the reasoning, how real the mental agony!

V

There was a fourth and more astonishing surprise. Even those of my readers whose

reverence for the clergy has forbidden them to laugh thus far may laugh now as one not a clergyman, the most burlesque character of all, advances to the front of the stage. It is none other than Mr. Matthew Arnold. That theologians should receive a new truth with resentment is, perhaps, not so remarkable. But England had a higher court of appeal—her men of letters. Among these Mr. Matthew Arnold was preëminent as the representative of "sweetness and light," of that broad culture which knows the best that has been said by the greatest men of all time. Here was undeniably one of the freest and noblest spirits of that age, poet and philosopher in one. Accordingly we open with keenest anticipations to the article which Mr. Arnold contributed to Macmillan's Magazine for January, 1863. Alas, it is nothing but an amazing display of superciliousness!

"With many holiday and lady terms" the literary critic spurns the Bishop. He says, "Occasionally the uncritical spirit of our race determines to perform a great act of self-humiliation. Such an act it has recently accomplished. It has just sent forth as its scapegoat into the wilderness, amidst a titter from educated Europe, the Bishop of Natal." Mr. Arnold does not for a moment deny the truth of the Bishop's contentions; he freely admits it. But taking his stand upon the great principle that every religious book "must either inform the instructed or edify the little-instructed" he classifies Colenso's book with the "gainsayings of Korah." The intelligent part of the English people, according to Mr. Arnold, already know that the Bible is not true history, and the common people ought not to be let into that secret, for the knowledge will only destroy what religion they have. No flamen of old pagan

times ever held the populace of Rome in more utter contempt than Mr. Arnold holds the working people of England. He is nauseated with "the weak trifling of the Bishop of Natal," and asks with a Dundreary yawn, "Now on the higher culture of his nation what informing influence can the Bishop of Natal's arithmetical demonstrations exercise?"

Alas! wearing soft raiment and living delicately, elegant literary Culture may fail to recognize the significance of John the Baptist when he comes crying in the wilderness.

VI

Colenso's fifth and final surprise was in discovering that his hardest problem in Africa was not the heathenism of the Zulus but the rapacity and ferocity of his fellow Englishmen, settlers and government officials, all professed Christians and members

of the established Church. Wars with the natives were precipitated on the flimsiest pretexts and then troops were sent out to burn villages, massacre old and young and appropriate cattle. When the wretched blacks fled and hid their families in caves, these caves were exploded with dynamite, and the women and children perished with the warriors. A large share of the labor of the Bishop's later years was in pleading with Christian England for justice to heathen Zulus. And in this chivalrous service to practical righteousness he lost many of the friends who had stood by him in his fight for freedom of thought.

VII

How antipodal every item of this experience was to all that the ardent young missionary had contemplated when he set forth from Christian England to spread the gos-

pel in Africa! If I could command the services of a talented cartoonist I would have him make me a series of sketches.

The first sketch should show the smiling young missionary bishop starting for Africa, serenely confident in the possession of "the faith once for all delivered to the saints," strong in the support of the ancient church and the world-encircling empire, fully prepared to enlighten "the heathen in his blindness." The next sketch should show him beginning his work with the "intelligent Zulu" and at the first childlike question starting up to walk the floor in bewilderment and agony of mind to find that the pupil has an eye clearer than his own. The next picture should represent a group of Christian scholars in England receiving the book from Africa and divided between wrath and laughter over the astounding notion of learning from a black man and testing a

sacred book by arithmetic. The next picture should show England's highest literary critic, the apostle of Culture; and it would be impressive

> "To see him shine so brisk and smell so sweet
> And talk so like a waiting gentlewoman."

The last picture should be of the missionary, back in England, pleading with his fellow Christians not to be more heathenish than the Africans.

Gilbert and Sullivan never put on the stage anything more wildly absurd than this. And yet it is merely one sober chapter out of the history of Anglo-Saxon Christianity in the last half of the nineteenth century. So recently as that, the holiest convictions and the missionary efforts of Anglo-Saxon Christians were limited by arrogance of race, blind traditionalism, ecclesiastical assumption, intellectual timidity, liter-

ary dilettantism and sordid material interests.

Have we of the twentieth century risen above all of these? Do we not at this very hour see a large part of the Christians of America denying the undeniable and hot in bitter and discourteous debates over theological theories while a suffering world waits for salvation?

EDUCATION FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

VI

EDUCATION FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

I

If this world is ever made "safe for democracy," or even for civilization, it will not be by war but by better religious education.

Many thoughtful people see this clearly and would gladly devote their lives to the work, if only they knew just how to go about it.

Plainly the main point will be to inspire children with the ideals of Jesus. The child must feel down in his heart that the great material prizes of the world—money, power,

display and physical indulgence—are cheap and coarse when compared with the joys of unselfish service and the fellowship of the heavenly-minded.

The watchword of all modern education is "the laboratory method." In nothing is that watchword more essential than in teaching religion. The child must see religion in action, in daily life. He must see it in the eyes and hear it on the tongues of those right about him, whom he admires most and trusts most completely.

How can the young be imbued with the spirit of Jesus? Mainly by close association with older people who are living the Christian life. Worship is learned in worshipping assemblies. Sacred song makes its impressions on the heart at the tenderest age. Affectionateness, truthfulness, generosity, patience, self-control and courtesy are learned by seeing them practised in the home

circle. The boy who has not been intimate with any chivalrous man starts in life at a sad disadvantage. The chief favor that any true father can confer upon his son is simply to let the boy be with him frequently enough and long enough to know him well. At West Point a standard of what is "becoming in an officer and a gentleman" is lived up to by the military community. Cadets adopt it as their own or find that they have no place there. Here is a matter for reflection. The main work of the church is the education of the young; the main thing in education is direct communication. Can a generation engrossed in money-making during the week and in merry-making at the week-ends give time enough to the children to pass on to them the habits of the Christian life?

Next to actual association with living Christians comes familiarity with the life stories of Jesus and of those who in the

centuries since his time have walked in his footsteps. Biography is the natural material for inspiring boys and girls with high ideals and enthusiasm for noble living. The story of Jesus is of course supreme. But as given in the New Testament it is very brief, and all that small children can understand of it is soon learned. At each stage of their education, as their understandings enlarge, they will need to return and deepen their acquaintance with the Master. But what other biographical material should come next to that of Jesus?

II

Sound pedagogy teaches that education should proceed from the near to the remote. Therefore the biographical material best fitted to inspire American children with Christian ideals will be drawn mainly from our own times and our own country. Fortunately there is an inexhaustible wealth of

this ready to our hands. The only difficulty is that which springs from the embarrassment of riches. How much there is in the life and words of Abraham Lincoln! Or take the story of Booker T. Washington, with his common sense, courage, patience, invincible good nature, hopefulness and inclusive patriotism. Could anything better illustrate true Christianity? No other man of our time, starting so low, rose so high. Books of golden deeds already exist and others can easily be compiled. The men who submitted their own bodies for experimentation in the investigation of yellow fever, Anthony Comstock daring the malice of all the corrupters of youth in his fight to keep the mails pure —what an infinite variety of heroism our times have seen!

Biography merges imperceptibly into history. Our Sunday-schools should teach American history from the religious point of

view just as ancient Jewish synagogues taught the history of their own race and land. American children should be taught to blush for our national sins and to rejoice in our national acts of righteousness. The return of the excessive Chinese indemnity, the magnanimity of our course toward Cuba, the fact that for a century we have kept a peaceful northern boundary of 3,000 miles without soldiers—all facts like these should be emphasized in developing a national consciousness of Christian principle. When at the battle of Santiago Captain Philip repressed the shouting of his sailors in the moment of victory because the poor Spaniards were dying, a new high water mark of humane feeling was made in the history of war.

The vast welfare work of the Red Cross and the Y. M. C. A., the countless millions expended under the direction of Hoover and

others for the suffering children and adults of desolated Europe and the near East, the instant rush of American sympathy to help earthquake-stricken Japan—such things teach concretely what the heart of America is.

In recent years a number of autobiographies have appeared which in a striking way set forth the sublime Christian principles for which America stands and the reaction of the great opportunities here offered upon the noblest upward-struggling souls of all races. Such books as Jacob Riis's "Making of an American," Edward A. Steiner's "From Alien to Citizen," Mary Antin's "Promised Land," and Booker Washington's "Up from Slavery," lift the reader above race prejudice, and through the eyes of Dane, Jew and Negro show him the divine ideal, already partially realized, in this most favored of lands. The fascination of a story of personal adventure blends with the contem-

plation of the moral greatness of the nation. The child in reading learns at the same time what Christianity means in the individual life and in that of the nation. He loves his country more intelligently for what she offers to all and he forgets his prejudices while sympathizing with those of other races who find in America their promised land.

III

Heretofore it has been assumed without question that most of the biographical and historical material used in Sunday-schools will be taken from the Old Testament. But at this point one of the most fundamental changes in Religious Education is "categorically imperative." Very few of the Old Testament stories illustrate distinctively Christian principles. Even the best of them have serious defects. The story of Joseph is incomparably the most beautiful; but it

presents some grave moral difficulties such as Joseph's failure for nine years to inform his old broken-hearted father of his safety and prosperity (a detail which the author could not manage without spoiling his plot) and Joseph's taking advantage of the divine deliverance to reduce the Egyptians to helpless serfdom (a detail due to the author's lack of care for the interests of an alien people). The story of Daniel in the lions' den is one of the most thrilling; but it has the serious defect that, when Daniel is saved and drawn up, the wives and innocent little children of his enemies are thrown into the den and all their bones are broken before they reach the bottom, and this without a word of protest from Daniel now so high in power and in favor with the king.

Many of the Old Testament stories are intended to teach ideas just the reverse of what we now believe. One of the common-

est of these ideas is that Jehovah's favor makes it superfluous for his people to have any intelligence or equipment. Indeed it is taught that Jehovah prefers to give victory where all natural means are absent, so that the glory may be all his own. The story of Gideon is one of those that make this point. We, on the contrary, endeavor to impress the children with the truth that this is a world of law and that "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," for God is not mocked.

Constantly and passionately a preposterous misconception of the Bible is impressed upon the American people by many eloquent and honored speakers. Statesmen, theologians and editors, all join in a chorus of unmeasured eulogy of the Bible, without any suggestion that we must discriminate between its several constituents and recognize its historical limitations. In a scientific lec-

ture it would be thought ridiculous to praise gold for its lightness and silver for its hardness. Precious as those metals are they cannot excel the baser ones in every quality. But everything in the Bible is assumed to be the very "Word of God," charged in some magic way with spiritual potency and divinely adapted, we know not how, to make Christians. It makes no difference whether the story is that of Jacob deceiving his blind old father or of Samson slaying 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of an ass; in this most sacred and inward sphere the ordinary principles of psychology and pedagogy are not supposed to hold and there need be no visible adaptation of material to the end desired.

Suppose that instead of hearing about the slaughter of the Canaanites every child were familiarized with the story of John Howard working for the welfare of prisoners, Sir

Moses Montefiore working for oppressed Jews, Dorothy Dix working for the insane, the Gallaudets working for deaf-mutes, Clara Barton founding the Red Cross and Trudeau at Saranac working for the victims of tuberculosis, would it not be better?

IV

For any one to attempt to state the sober truth about the Bible is as dangerous in America as lese-majesty used to be in Germany. Lately at a great convention of one of the leading denominations one of our most learned and venerable Doctors of Divinity held up the Old Testament as an indispensable text-book for all public schools on the ground that it teaches the equality of all before the law. The truth is that the Old Testament legalized polygamy, slavery, hereditary priesthood and undying race prejudice. But that convention

of educated clergymen who listened to that amazing address manifested no dissent and, whatever a few may have secretly thought, the general public was left with the impression that the speaker had voiced the sentiment of the assembly. How few are the stories in the Old Testament that cannot be matched by better ones from recent American history! Compare any incidents in the military history of Joshua with incidents in the career of Washington. Compare the story of David on his deathbed giving bloody advice to his successor Solomon with that of President McKinley on his deathbed singing "Nearer, my God, to Thee."

Indisputably the original statements of the fundamental truths of our holy religion and all that we know of the only perfect life are in the Bible. But they lie there as gold lies in the mountains, scattered through a great mass of earthy material which only the

most patient and courageous scientific scrutiny can separate and put aside. When such a separation is not made and the whole mixed mass of the material is used without discrimination in religious education, a most disastrous confusion is permanently established in the minds of the people so educated.

We were led into this digression in regard to the prevailing misconception of the Bible while speaking of biography and history as the material mostly to be used in developing high sentiments in the young, but biography and history are by no means all that we have; the uses of poetry and eloquent prose must not be forgotten. Children should from the first memorize the most beautiful passages from the Bible: the beatitudes, the most striking parables and other sayings of Jesus, the 23d and other favorite psalms, the 13th chapter of I Corinthians and other passages from the New Testament. There are also

many beautiful hymns and poems by such authors as Whittier and Longfellow which every child should have wrought into the very substance of his memories. These things shape the inner life, the ideals and aspirations of the soul; they furnish interpretations of its richest experiences.

V

The most inspiring spiritual literature, whatever its form, is essentially autobiographical. To understand the true life one must look into the hearts of those who live it. Next to Jesus stands St. Paul, distinctly below and yet still how sublimely high. Of all those who have written "confessions" none has disclosed such living pictures of Christian experience as Paul. Who can adequately speak of the leaping geysers, the snow-crowned summits, the granite masses, the flowery meadows of this surpassing

scenery? But the study of Paul is only for the most advanced students. It may be unhesitatingly called "post-graduate" study. Younger scholars will of course be taught Luke's stories of Paul's travels and shipwreck in the book of Acts. These have the interest that belongs to all sea stories and narratives of adventure; but since the climax is generally in some astounding miracle they do not illustrate principles of action that hold good in the world in which our children must live. They belong with other wonder tales, except that they give some true impressions of that complex world in which Christianity first spread.

The real Paul, the Paul of the epistles, was at the same time Jew, Greek and Roman, nurtured in rabbinic learning, breathing in Greek conceptions with the air of the city around him, tingling with the consciousness "*Civis Romanus sum.*" He was the con-

summate product of the melting-pot of that age. The serenity of Jesus and the tumult of Paul differ as sunrise on the lake of Galilee differs from a storm on the Mediterranean. In Galatians, for example, starting from two or three texts of the Old Testament which he wholly misunderstands, Paul advances an argument every term of which is ambiguous and every link fallacious and storms at his readers with anathemas and reproaches which make painful reading for any one who has caught the spirit of Jesus. Incidentally he gives immortal utterance to many glorious truths. His high aim was the vindication of Christian freedom. Jesus had reached the same end in his own quiet way by two or three epigrams referring to the impossibility of putting new patches on old garments and new wine into old bottles, and being sad at a wedding. Paul could think of no way to free his Galatians from

Judaistic ritual but to construct a whole system of theology which has hobbled the Christian thinking of all succeeding ages.

The notion that the Bible is a book that may be profitably studied without note or comment, without knowledge of ancient thought, without historic sense, by simply fitting all statements into one harmonious map of the plan of salvation, so dominates most American Christians that they cannot love the glorious, heroic, volcanic Paul without taking over all of his impossible theological vagaries. It is often said that Paul made his theology out of his experience. Not at all; he interpreted his wonderful Christian experience by a theology based on his early rabbinic education.

VI

So far we have been considering inspirational Religious Education,—the inocula-

tion of young souls with the mind of Christ. Many teachers have never advanced in their thinking to the discrimination of Inspiration and Information. Having awakened the higher life in the soul, they would present the neophyte with a Bible and tell him to go and live according to its precepts making that the lamp unto his feet. It is just as if West Point education should end with inspiring in the cadets the loftiest patriotism and include no instruction in the art of war. One teacher of a Bible class in New York told me that he was training his young men to go right to the words of Jesus in every instance to settle the practical questions of their everyday life. He was astonished when I told him that the thing was impossible.

While our first and fundamental aim will be to develop the Christian heart, that is, to make men and women who have "the mind

of Christ," our second and equally distinct aim must be to develop the Christian head, that is, intelligence as to the present needs of the world and as to the best methods of service. Then our third concern will be to habituate our pupils to the actual living of the Christian life in secrecy with God and openly among men by doing in all social relations what intelligent love requires.

With this analysis in mind we may look back over the past and see at once why, with the best intentions, Christian leaders have so often failed entirely in their efforts, or have done more harm than good. Saint Francis of Assisi kissed the lepers. He is the preëminent example of the loving heart and the uneducated head. He had the impulses of Jesus, but he lacked the intelligence necessary to apply them. He tried to promote spiritual religion in Italy by eradicating from its leaders love of family, love of

property and love of free intelligence; but these three are the essential roots of civilization. So his movement has for seven hundred years blighted the land it strove to bless. Papini is another Italian who is a shining example of noble inspiration without information. Religious Education in America never can advance normally until its three great aims are clearly distinguished and each intelligently pursued. The young Christian of to-day must in some way be made to know what we believe now and what there is to do now and what are the best methods known now.

VII

Almost all informational Religious Education is now given in the form of Bible classes. Some passage from a sacred writer who lived in a world of thought and action far remote from ours is read and inferences are directly drawn as to what we should think and do

to-day in New York and Chicago. In a recent advertisement of a course of Y. M. C. A. lessons it was said, "The aim is to present the life of the Christian as Paul saw it in terms that apply directly to our every-day life."

Such an attempt is exposed to two very great dangers. First, there is neither time nor temper for a cool, honest, historical study of Paul's strange thinking. To discover that he held a notion with which we cannot at all agree would block the whole working of the plan.

Yet Paul held many such notions. The teacher is therefore under strong temptation to ignore what Paul really meant and to interpret his language in a sense that is more convenient for practical purposes. For example, at least during all his earlier years, Paul was on the *qui vive* with expectation of the speedy second coming of Christ. His

ethics were "eschatological ethics." In constant anticipation of the immediate end of the world he discouraged any effort for social reform. For another example we may refer to Paul's low view of women and of marriage as set forth in I Corinthians. Even the famous passage in Ephesians, comparing marriage to the union of Christ and the Church, rasps us; for *we* think that the woman is more apt to be the savior of the man than the man to be the savior of the woman. We utterly fail to see the analogy that Paul saw.

The second great danger of this method arises from the fact that it is seldom possible to pass by direct deduction from the general truths that Paul did express to practical maxims for our everyday life. The teacher's opinions upon present day duty have been formed from a large variety of present day considerations and his air of drawing them

directly from Paul's words is a sleight of hand performance that is not ingenuous. The real grounds of his advice are not discovered and tested by the class.

Informational Religious Education must in future be conducted by the use of text-books prepared with pedagogical skill, each book devoted to the systematic presentation of some great department of modern Christian faith or life or some great problem of society. Consider such a question as this, Shall a young man to-day drink a cocktail with his dinner? This cannot be settled by simply opening the Bible to the text, "Be no longer a drinker of water," or to the story of the miracle at Cana of Galilee. Alcohol is the most dreadful curse of the world. War cannot compare with it in destructiveness. What is needed in religious education is not occasional passionate denunciations but a series of text-books calmly and fairly setting

forth what every young person ought to know about alcohol and the history of temperance effort wise and unwise.

Our country is now engaged in a life and death struggle with its most deadly enemy, Strong Drink. The question is, Can the Constitution and the laws be enforced? When our roads are crowded with automobiles rushing like express trains, when scores of children and adults are being killed or crippled every day by men driving "under the influence" can we leave the young uninstructed about alcohol?

Take as another example the question of the right use of money. Upon simple-minded readers the natural impression of the New Testament is that the bestowal of one's entire property in immediate cash gifts to the poor is the best, indeed the only approved, use for money. Jesus said, "Sell what you have and give gifts of mercy," and

"To him who asks give." It is astonishing that so few Bible students have observed that Jesus was particularly fond of speaking in hyperboles, that is, stating his ideas in the most extravagant form possible and never mentioning any qualifications or exceptions. But one solemn lesson of history is that thoughtless giving is only second in pernicious effects to heartless withholding. Within recent years a vast deal of careful study has been devoted to this subject, resulting in the reshaping of the whole activity of benevolence.

None of this information is in the Bible. The duty of giving and the joy of giving are fully taught in the Bible, but the wise ways of giving are not even suggested. In these all young Christians should be carefully educated. They should also know, what is nowhere stated in the Bible, that to keep one's money

and use it in employing labor is often better than to give it away in alms.

The foregoing illustrations suffice to show that the common way of reading over a Scripture passage and making such desultory edifying remarks as chance to suggest themselves to the mind of the teacher never can give satisfactory knowledge either of the meaning of the ancient writer or of present day questions. The use of tobacco, dancing, card-playing, theater-going, Sunday amusements and a great variety of similar matters must be considered systematically by wide inductions and scientific tests; they cannot be settled by interpreting texts.

VIII

The shining glory of modern times is the advance of Science. Study of the universe has given us new heavens and a new earth. The vastness of creation and the inconceiv-

able minuteness of its ordered details impress mankind as never before with the majesty of God. For the universe is primarily a revelation of God. Its laws are God's habits. Evolution is simply God's method. We know God to-day as no previous generation ever knew him because we know his works so much better and we have been carried far away from many ancient ways of thinking of him.

Above all things we have a new conception of law, and of the relation of law to personality and to freedom, and this new conception dominates all our thinking. Law is seen to be the supreme manifestation of the faithfulness of God and the only possible basis for intelligence and freedom. Law is not a fetter to imprison man. Law is the scepter by which God rules, and which man is free to take and use, just so far as he is willing to take the pains to discover it, and

using it he may, like God, create new animals and fruits and flowers to meet his needs or his fancies, and new machines to run and swim and fly.

Our whole thought of Nature and the Supernatural has been transformed. One large part of education in the future must be the impartation to young people of those profound religious ideas which flow directly from modern scientific conceptions. The young must be led to see God in nature, to delight in natural beauty as inviting them to companionship with him, to reverence his laws and submit to them with glad obedience, and to look upon all human work, whether agriculture or engineering or government or social uplift, as co-working with God. Hygiene, eugenics, sexual purity, the use of stimulants and narcotics—all questions that relate to the preservation, efficiency or transmission of our physical life have profoundly

religious aspects which should be treated in wisely prepared text-books and taught by qualified instructors.

IX

At the end of his religious education the young Christian will be expected to be found ready to enter into the activities of his city and of the world, to serve on boards and committees and to assist in shaping policies. He will find a number of local and world-wide movements and agencies of recent origin embracing large numbers of workers and in various ways promoting the kingdom of heaven. First, of course, stands the Church, which, while in origin old, is in its present organizations and methods recent. Then there are foreign missions, Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, social settlements, the Salvation Army, young people's societies, the world student federation, the Red Cross, prison reform and

a host of others. Surely a large part of Christian education should be concerned with study of the origin, growth and work of these vital movements. The names of George Williams, General Booth, Arnold Toynbee, Clara Barton, Francis E. Clark, Jane Addams, John R. Mott, Thomas Mott Osborne, Herbert C. Hoover and other leaders should be familiar and there should be enough detailed information regarding their history to maintain permanent and sympathetic coöperation in the movements.

The Christian more than any other man is a citizen of the world. Nothing human is alien to him. No religious education can be regarded as complete which does not include a religious geography of the world, a study of the present religious conditions and needs of all nations, as a basis for intelligent support of missionary and welfare

work. Nothing of all this is in the Bible.

Following the pedagogical order, which is the reverse of the chronological, the student will proceed from the study of the present day activities of the Church to the history of its origin and its activities and doctrines down through the centuries. This may be followed by the consideration of Jewish religious history and the Old Testament, and then by a course in comparative religion. The crown of the informational course will naturally be the study of ethics and of the great doctrines of Christian faith, particularly the doctrines of God, Prayer and Immortality. Somewhere in the course Andrew D. White's "Warfare of Science with Theology" should certainly come in.

These courses in a layman's education will be analogous to the traditional course in systematic theology in a clergyman's. From

the very beginning of his Christian training a child will have absorbed without special definition or discussion the fundamental beliefs of his teachers: but as he matures these beliefs must be distinctly stated, their grounds shown and current misconceptions cleared away. Such a remarkable little book as Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick's on "The Meaning of Prayer" indicates the possibilities in this direction.

X

The third and last division of Religious Education is concerned with Practice, the formation of the habits of Christian living. Practical teaching at West Point includes, first, the personal habits of the soldier, and second, military service. A corresponding division may be recognized in religious work. Far from waiting for some annual "decision day" the teacher of Christianity should

insist that the class begin at once to practice the lesson and should scout the notion of study without practice just as much as if he were teaching them how to play baseball.

In planning the activities of young Christians a few important principles must be kept in mind. One is the principle of grading. Children of a given age will not be expected or encouraged to try to do what is natural only for older children or for adults. In general what is called "work for others" comes naturally in the later stages of education. Young children will show their religion mainly in increased kindness and courtesy, in prompt obedience to parents and teachers, in truthfulness and purity of words and acts. This is for them the practice of the Christian life.

Even with high-school boys and girls the stress should be mainly on similar things. It is a grief to think of the low standards of

conduct which are tolerated in many high schools. There is often gross carelessness in using things that belong to others or to the city. This not infrequently passes into actual theft. There is also much dishonesty in cribbing, much idleness and mutual communication of evil habits. Young Christians in the high schools should begin their practice of the Christian life by cultivating genuine loyalty to the school and strict fidelity in every duty of school life. Young people who are in business should show their Christianity by keeping their eyes on their work and not on the clock. All young people should be particularly urged to act as Christians in home relations and duties.

Ministers and religious teachers often fail to present things to the young in the right perspective. The "means of grace" are emphasized more than the graces to which they are but a means. Ritualistic forms are pre-

sented as Christian work. Much commendation has been bestowed on the boy who kneeled down by his bedside to say his prayers amid the scoffs of his schoolmates. That boy ought to have been told to show his Christianity by playing fair in the ball game, and to keep his praying a secret matter between himself and God. Yet the "means of grace" cannot safely be neglected, though thought of merely as helps to the Christian life, not its manifestations. Some ritual is essential to any ordered life though Jesus was not interested in ritual. He was supremely interested in the infusion of love into the ordinary secular affairs of everyday life. The training of the Boy Scouts is directly in this line.

Young Christians should not be led to make too great account of small religious extras which may be tacked on to an unspiritualized life. Carrying flowers to a

hospital, teaching in Sunday-school and attending and leading meetings are good and they must not be omitted; but they are not in the same class with habitual thoughtfulness for Mother's comfort, fidelity in sweeping the bank, regard for the feelings of others, scrupulous honesty in money matters, and such homely virtues.

As young people grow older they must increasingly take on work for others of the kind commonly called religious, and they must develop leadership. Before their education can be considered complete they must have experience in teaching those who are younger and in guiding them in clean sport and in church and welfare work. The young people's societies and the "High Y," as the high school section of the Young Men's Christian Association is familiarly termed, offer large opportunities for such normal practice.

XI

To what conclusion has our survey brought us? We find that the prevailing method of religious education in America cannot claim the name of system. It rests on no psychological principles. It has no intelligent curriculum. It begins nowhere and ends nowhere. It uses much unsuitable material while neglecting a mine of wealth. It neglects all the experience of the Church and all the heroes of Christian history. It neglects the present condition of the world, the religious movements of our day and the duties of the hour. It neglects the revelation of God in the universe as disclosed by modern science. It neglects what social science has discovered in the ways of doing good to men. It imparts no sane method of ascertaining truth and deciding duty. The only method it uses is a capricious interpretation of Bible texts. It fails to carry

practice along with theory, and so it develops no trained experts in religious work.

If this world is to be transformed into the kingdom of heaven there must be more intelligence in our efforts.

THE END

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